Food Culture in Spain

F. XAVIER MEDINA

GREENWOOD PRESS

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Bay of Biscay
FRANCE
Avilés
Santander
La Coruña
Gijón
Bilbao
Pasajes
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Vigo
León
Pyrenees
Valladolid
Zaragoza
Salamanca
Tarragona
Barcelona
Balearic Sea
MADRID
Castellón de la Plana
PORT.
Valencia
Balearic Islands
Alicante
Córdoba
Cartagena
Huelva
Sevilla
Mediterranean Sea
Málaga
Cádiz
Gibraltar (U.K.)
Strait of Gibraltar
Ceuta (SP.)
Melilla (SP.)
North Atlantic Ocean
ALGERIA
MOROCCO
Canary Islands are not shown.

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F. XAVIER MEDINA

Food Culture around the World
Ken Albala, Series Editor



GREENWOOD PRESS
Westport, Connecticut · London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Medina, F. Xavier.
Food culture in Spain / F. Xavier Medina.
p. cm. — (Food culture around the world, ISSN 1545–2638)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0–313–32819–6 (alk. paper)
1. Cookery, Spanish. 2. Food habits—Spain. I. Title. II. Series.
TX723.5.S7M43 2005
394.1'0946—dc22 2004019695

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2004019695
ISBN: 0–313–32819–6
ISSN: 1545–2638

First published in 2005

Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881
An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.
www.greenwood.com

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48–1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The publisher has done its best to make sure the instructions and/or recipes in this book are correct. However, users should apply judgment and experience when preparing recipes, especially parents and teachers working with young people. The publisher accepts no responsibility for the outcome of any recipe included in this volume.

Contents

Series Foreword

The appearance of the Food Culture around the World series marks a definitive stage in the maturation of Food Studies as a discipline to reach a wider audience of students, general readers, and foodies alike. In comprehensive interdisciplinary reference volumes, each on the food culture of a country or region for which information is most in demand, a remarkable team of experts from around the world offers a deeper understanding and appreciation of the role of food in shaping human culture for a whole new generation. I am honored to have been associated with this project as series editor.

Each volume follows a series format, with a timeline of food-related dates and narrative chapters entitled Introduction, Historical Overview, Major Foods and Ingredients, Cooking, Typical Meals, Eating Out, Special Occasions, and Diet and Health. Each also includes a glossary, resource guide, bibliography, and illustrations.

Finding or growing food has of course been the major preoccupation of our species throughout history, but how various peoples around the world learn to exploit their natural resources, come to esteem or shun specific foods and develop unique cuisines reveals much more about what it is to be human. There is perhaps no better way to understand a culture, its values, preoccupations, and fears, than by examining its attitudes toward food. Food provides the daily sustenance around which families and communities bond. It provides the material basis for rituals through which people celebrate the passage of life stages and their connection to divin-

ity. Food preferences also serve to separate individuals and groups from each other, and as one of the most powerful factors in the construction of identity, we physically, emotionally and spiritually become what we eat.

By studying the foodways of people different from ourselves we also grow to understand and tolerate the rich diversity of practices around the world. What seems strange or frightening among other people becomes perfectly rational when set in context. It is my hope that readers will gain from these volumes not only an aesthetic appreciation for the glories of the many culinary traditions described, but also ultimately a more profound respect for the peoples who devised them. Whether it is eating New Year's dumplings in China, folding tamales with friends in Mexico or going out to a famous Michelin-starred restaurant in France, understanding these food traditions helps us to understand the people themselves.

As globalization proceeds apace in the twenty-first century it is also more important than ever to preserve unique local and regional traditions. In many cases these books describe ways of eating that have already begun to disappear or have been seriously transformed by modernity. To know how and why these losses occur today also enables us to decide what traditions, whether from our own heritage or that of others, we wish to keep alive. These books are thus not only about the food and culture of peoples around the world, but also about ourselves and who we hope to be.

Ken Albala
University of the Pacific

Introduction

This book offers an overview of Spanish food and eating habits, taking into account Spain's long and complex history, along with its distinctive social, cultural, linguistic, geographic, political, and economic characteristics. From the perspective of non-European students and general readers, the history, culture, and eating practices of Spaniards may be unknown. Information on Spain may be lacking, stereotyped, or unreliable. Today it is common, for example, to find food resources and recipes devoted to Spanish cooking on the Internet. Yet, most of them are biased or confuse Spanish elements with others belonging to different cuisines, such as the Latin American and southern European ones.

This book will discuss foodstuffs, culinary methods and practices, lifestyles, space, sociability, and commensality in an attempt to consider the Spanish food culture today in context.

SPAIN WITHIN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CONTEXT

Spain is a country in southwestern Europe and it occupies most of the Iberian Peninsula. It borders Portugal to the east, France to the north, and Morocco to the south. It boasts a wide variety of landscapes: a large central plain, some of the most important mountain ranges of Europe, and nearly 5,000 miles of coast. It is washed by the Mediterranean and the Cantabrian Seas and by the Atlantic Ocean, and it also includes two archipelagoes: the Balearic and the Canary Islands. Modern Spain

has an impressive heritage and is the result of the combination of various cultures and nationalities throughout a long historical process. Spain lies at the crossroads between Europe and North Africa; thus it has always been a land of passage, a cultural, racial, linguistic, and of course gastronomic melting pot (Indo-Europeans, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Germans, Arabs, etc.). In addition, Spain has maintained a close relationship with other nations (Italy, France, Portugal, Hispanic America, the Philippines, Morocco, and equatorial Africa), which has helped to shape today's eating practices in Spain and, through Spain, in Europe. Spain's role in introducing products from the Americas into the rest of Europe during the sixteenth century was pivotal.

CUISINES WITH STRONG PERSONALITIES AND GOOD PRODUCTS

Gastronomy in Spain has always been of major importance. Cuisine in Spain is regional. Most Spanish cuisines have evolved around strong regional identities and representative elements that have changed through the centuries and have developed to such an extent that nowadays some chefs, representative of the new Spanish cuisine (such as the Basque and the Catalan ones), are among the most important cooks in the international gastronomic panorama. Another important aspect to take into account is the quality of Spanish products. Spain was an agricultural country until the mid-twentieth century: the mild climate and the quality of the soil have facilitated the production of widely appreciated foods that are highly competitive on the international market. The Spanish food industry made a good start at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century; however, it would not fare well in the following decades due to various historical events, particularly the Spanish civil war. Only in the second half of the twentieth century would food-related activities become established, and only at the cost of a strong dependence on foreign multinational companies.

LIFESTYLE

There is more to eating than the ingestion of foodstuffs; it is not only a biological function, but it has strong social and cultural components that must be highlighted when considering food culture in Spain. All the more so, if one considers that this is a country where eating is conceived of as a social act, as an activity that must be shared with others.

Spaniards highly value eating with their family, friends, and colleagues. Sharing food fosters social relationships and it is not uncommon for meetings to be articulated (or ended) around a dining table. It is unusual to see a person eating alone in a restaurant or drinking alone in a bar (unless she or he is forced by specific circumstances). As a matter of fact, such situations are avoided, which shows how socially important meals are in Spain (and in Mediterranean areas in general). In Spain, "eating alone is like not eating at all." Another feature of the Spanish society that is worth highlighting in this respect is that people like eating and drinking out. The climate, with its mild temperatures, is typical of a southern European country, but it is never extreme, and it allows outdoor celebrations and meals almost all year long (except, perhaps, in the harshest winter months). Eating out includes popular feasts, communal meals, or simple visits to restaurants, establishments with outdoor tables, bars, cafés, and so forth.

FOOD CULTURE IN SPAIN

The various chapters of this book describe Spanish food culture. The first chapter examines how food practices in the Iberian Peninsula have changed over the centuries, how different cuisines have been created through the abandonment or incorporation of various products and dishes, and how they have evolved up to the present.

The second chapter is devoted to the various foodstuffs and their role within Spanish cuisines. The third chapter deals with the various cooking methods, equipment, and utensils, as well as with who cooks, in what situations, and where. The fourth chapter, "Typical Meals," discusses aspects such as meals times and lifestyles; the second part includes a survey of the different Spanish regional cuisines, each with its own personality, products, specialties, influences, and climate.

The fifth chapter is about eating out. As previously observed, eating and drinking out is a very frequent social activity in Spain, and this chapter considers the history and typology of establishments (restaurants, bars, cafés, taverns, etc.) and spaces where these activities are carried out.

Seasonal festivities and the celebrations of events related to the individual's life cycle are highly ritualized occasions in which food also plays an outstanding role. These aspects are dealt with in the sixth chapter, which is a survey of the main festivities held through the year, as well as of the main events that mark a person's life (birth, wedding, death). Last, the seventh chapter discusses the most significant aspects of the Spanish

diet and health, reflecting on the future of the Spanish eating regimen. Although the Spanish diet has always been synonymous with the Mediterranean diet, it is now undergoing some transformations.

Hopefully, the reader will find this book a useful guide to the various elements that make up Spanish food culture: tastes, aromas, textures, as well as company and conversation.

Timeline

300,000 B.C.	Middle Paleolithic. Fire is discovered and used in Iberia.
25,000–15,000 B.C.	Late Paleolithic. Cave paintings (Altamira) of hunting scenes.
7000–5000 B.C.	Transition to the Neolithic. First records of agricultural activities, animal stabling, ceramic making, and food storage. Cave paintings (Mediterranean area) of human scenes, hunting scenes, and honey and plants collection.
5000 B.C.	Ancient remains of beer in western Europe (Cova Sant Sadurni, Barcelona).
Circa 1100 B.C.	The Phoenicians arrive in Iberia and found Cadiz, the most ancient city in the west of Europe. They develop trade in this area and start cultivating olive trees. They establish fish-salting plants in their colonies in the south of the peninsula.
1000 B.C.	Indo-European invasion of the peninsula. New agricultural techniques, introduction of new foods (e.g., lentils, cabbage, millet); introduction of iron and improvement of bronze techniques.
700 B.C.	The first Greek settlers reach the Catalan coast (Roses, Empúries). They increase viticulture and almond crops, introduce wine production as well as certain kinds of table utensils and earthenware. The Carthaginians, from North Africa, arrive in Ibiza and later on in the Mediterranean costal regions.

500 B.C.	Agriculture becomes more important than shepherding.
218–197 B.C.	Rome conquers the Iberian Peninsula.
200 B.C.–400 A.D.	Roman Age: Establishment of rural housing *(villae)*, specialization and increase in grain, grapes, olive crops, and so forth. Exploitation of salt mines (food storage); intensive trade relationships in the Mediterranean area. Exportation of wheat, wine, and oil from Baetica and Tarraconensis regions to Rome and other colonies. Introduction of new products such as apricots, melons, and lemons.
100 A.D.	Christianity is introduced into Roman Spain; subsequent emphasis on ritual food (bread and wine).
411–415	Hispania (Latin term for the Iberian Peninsula) is invaded by Germanic peoples. Visigoths arrive.
568–586	First attempt at unification of the peninsula made by an independent kingdom. The Roman age in Hispania is over.
587	Visigothic kings convert to Catholicism.
711	Muslim troops cross the Strait of Gibraltar and invade the Iberian Peninsula. Beginning of the Arabian rule and of the age of the emirate.
718	Christian Reconquest *(Reconquista)* starts in the northern territories.
758	Beginning of the Caliphate of Cordoba, the most magnificent age of Muslim Spain (Al-Andalus). Beginning of water culture in the east of the peninsula, irrigation farming, development of rice crops, and so forth.
800s	Musician Ziryab arrives at the Court of Cordoba and introduces the refinements of the Near East: table manners, serving order of food, and new products, such as asparagus.
1009–1090	Dismantling of the Caliphate. Independent Muslim kingdoms *(taifas)*. Christian Reconquest advances toward the south.
1200s–1400s	Christian kingdoms progressively gain more territories and definitively expel Muslims with the reconquest of the last Andalus kingdom, Granada, in 1492.

1300s–1600s	Basque whalers fish in the north of Europe; introduction of cod and consolidation of its consumption in the Iberian Peninsula. In the seventeenth century the French expel the Basques from the fishing area of Newfoundland (Canada).
1324	Appearance of *Sent Soví*, the most important Catalan cookbook, the most ancient cookbook in Spain, and one of the oldest in Europe.
1400s–1500s	Specialized cultivation of sugar cane in the Canary Islands.
1400s–1700s	Importation and spreading of products from the Americas: potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, turkey, chocolate, and so forth. At the same time, European foods (wine, oil, grains, etc.) and plants (except olive trees) are introduced and acclimatized in the Americas.
1492	Two worlds meet when Christopher Columbus's expedition reaches the Antilles (West Indies). First contact with American products. Beginning of the Castilian conquest of the new continent. Conquest of Grenada, the last Muslim kingdom in the Iberian Peninsula. The Jews are expelled from Spain.
Early 1500s	The Iberian Peninsula experiences famine, due to a long drought and bad crops.
1512	The kingdom of Navarre joins the Castilian Crown. Almost all the peninsula—except Portugal—comes under the rule of one monarch.
1518–1520	Appearance of *Llibre de Coch* in Catalonia, cookbook by Ruperto de Nola that was published also in the Castilian language in Toledo in 1525.
1521	Hernán Cortés conquers the Aztec Empire (Mexico). Products, such as cocoa, are sent to Spain.
1561	Under King Philip II, Madrid is proclaimed, for the first time, capital and official residence of the Spanish Court.
1580–1668	The Portuguese Empire takes part of the Spanish Crown under Philip II, increasing the Spanish commerce of food and spices to Portuguese territories in Africa and Asia.
1599–1611	Publication of important cookbooks: *Libro del arte de cozina*, by Diego Granado (1599); *Libro de arte de cozina*, by

	Domingo Hernández de Maceras, in Salamanca (1607); *Arte de Cozina, Pastelería y Vizcochería y Conservería,* by Martínez Montiño (1611).
1700s–1800s	Beginning and consolidation of the influence of French cuisine in Spain.
1714–1717	Bourbon dynasty. The boundaries between Spanish kingdoms disappear, and so do taxes and tolls.
1716–1780	Spanish painter Luis Meléndez perfects still life, depicting Spanish food of his time, including some products from the Americas, such as tomatoes and chocolate.
1755	The Botanic Garden is created in Madrid. It will serve as laboratory for the introduction of American plants into Spain and Europe.
1766	Publication of the book: *Arte Cisoria, o Tratado del Arte de Cortar del Cuchillo* (On the art of cutting food), by the Marquis of Villena.
1800s	The first big covered markets are built in Spain. The most remarkable ones are those of Barcelona. Spreading of taverns, inns *(fondas)*, first cafés, and restaurants.
1808–1814	Independence War against Napoleon's French Empire.
1810–1824	Spain loses most of its colonies in the Americas.
1848	Opening of the first railway in Spain (Barcelona-Mataró). Revolution of food transportation, especially for fresh products.
1872	*Cava,* or sparkling wine champenoise style, is introduced in Catalonia, in the county of Penedès.
1898	Spanish-American War and definitive loss of the last Spanish overseas territories: Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and the Pacific islands.
Late 1800s	Urban development and first migratory movements of importance in Spain. Industrial revolution in Catalonia and the Basque and Cantabrian areas. Consolidation of the Spanish food industry. Beginning of tourism and catering.
Early 1900s	Folklore and reclamation of traditional recipe books of Spanish regions. Publication of numerous cookbooks,

	such *as La cocina española antigua,* by Emilia Pardo Bazán (1914), and *La Cocina Completa,* by the Marchioness of Parabere (1933).
1914–1917	First World War. Spain remains neutral.
1923–1929	Fascist dictatorship under Primo de Rivera.
1931–1939	Second Spanish Republic.
1933	Law for the creation of the designation of origin of Spanish wine.
1936–1939	Spanish civil war.
1939–1945	Second World War. Spain remains neutral.
1939–1975	Military dictatorship of General Francisco Franco. Postwar period of food scarcity during the 1940s and 1950s.
1946–1951	International political and economic isolation of Spain.
1953	Commercial and political deal of Franco's regime with the United States. End of the isolation.
1955	Spain enters the United Nations.
1960–1980	Industrial development policies in Spain. Great international tourist promotion of the country. Mass interior migrations from the rural areas to the city, especially to industrial centers (Catalonia, Basque Country, Madrid). Creation, in the big cities, of a great number of restaurants and establishments that specialize in different Spanish gastronomies.
1970	The designations of origin is extended to other products besides wine. Creation of the National Institute for the Designation of Origin (INDO), controlled by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture.
1970–1980	Birth and consolidation of the movements known as "New Basque Cuisine" (due to renowned cooks, such as Juan María Arzak and Pedro Subijana), and some time later, of the "New Catalan Cuisine" represented by Ferran Adrià and Santi Santamaria.
1973	The French company Carrefour opens the first Spanish hypermarket near Barcelona.
1975	Burger King opens the first fast-food restaurant in Spain, in Madrid.

1975–1978	Period of democratic transition in Spain.
1978	The new Spanish democratic Constitution is approved and the present "State of Autonomic Regions" is established.
1980s on	Worldwide "food fears" with various cases of dioxin contamination of chicken, beef, pork, and fish; mad cow disease; and so forth.
1984–1994	Spanish television broadcasts the first cooking program "Con las manos en la masa" ("With one's hand in the dough"), which is a big success all over Spain.
1985 on	A large number of "ethnic" restaurants are opened in various Spanish cities (mainly Barcelona and Madrid), coinciding with the boom of foreign immigration. From 1995 on, the number of such restaurants will multiply.
1986	Spain and Portugal enter the European Community. Spain enters the Free European Market (which affects the agricultural sector and food exportation). Progressive legal convergence with the European Union for the regulation of agricultural and food-related activities.
1986	The first Spanish fast-food chain-franchise is opened in Barcelona. It is the *bocadillería* (sandwich bar) *Bocatta* and it is characterized by a "local" food philosophy.
1990 on	Health warning about the change in Spanish eating practices. Promotion of the Mediterranean diet as the healthiest food model.
1990 on	International success of Spanish high cuisine. Spanish chefs are in the spotlight.
1991	In Barcelona the second Spanish fast-food sandwich-franchise—Pans & Company—is opened.
1994 on	Popularity and exportation (in the form of franchises) of Basque gastronomy and *pintxos* (small portions of various foods, similar to *tapas*). The Basque-Catalan chains *Lizarrán*, and later on *Sagardi*, will spread all over Spain.
1995 on	Basque chef Karlos Argiñano popularizes gastronomy and has the most viewers for his TV-cooking program.
1998	The European agricultural policies of Farm Commissioner Franz Fischler lead to a reduction of olive oil pro-

duction in southern European countries. Olive oil crisis in Spain and opposition to EU agrarian policies.

2000 on Mad cow crisis (*bovine spongiform encephalopathy*, BSE). Appearance of the first mad cow in Spain toward the end of 2000. As of October 2004, 465 cases have been reported in Spain.

2004 For the first time a Spanish chef, Catalan Ferran Adrià, is recognized as the top chef by the *New York Times* and *Le Monde* (Paris).

1

Historical Overview

FOOD IN THE PREHISTORIC AGE

In prehistoric times, the Iberian Peninsula was a vast, natural space with a wide variety of climates. It stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean and encompassed the inner Meseta (plateau) and the important mountainous areas, which provided abundant game and a variety of wild fruits, plants, and roots.

Settlements along the terraces of some rivers (Tajo and Guadalquivir) and on the Atlantic Ocean date from the early Paleolithic era, a period in which those animals that had adapted to warmer climates started giving way to other species that were fitter for cold temperatures, such as woolly rhinoceros, mammoths, and so forth. Such animals were difficult to hunt and were only occasionally eaten. Smaller animals, such as rabbits, birds, insects (worms and ants), reptiles (snakes and lizards), as well as shellfish and other easy prey of coastal and river areas, were more common as a food source. The diet was based mainly on wild fruits, plants, eggs, and honey. As fire was not mastered until the Middle Paleolithic era (about 300,000 years ago), food was ingested without being previously processed.

In most of the peninsula (the Castilian Meseta, Mediterranean, and Cantabrian areas) there are traces of Mousterian and Cro-magnon industry that date from the Middle Paleolithic era. During this period, game consumption increased and cooking practices developed due to the mastering of fire. The archaeological remains found in various peninsular digs

show that in this period the most hunted animals were goats, horses, boars, deer, roe, rabbits, and birds. Elephants, oxen, lynx, bears, and wolves were less frequently captured and some of them were more valued for their furs than for the meat they provided.

Evidence of the late Paleolithic era can be found in two areas: the Cantabrian and the Mediterranean. Food consumption did not vary much in this period; deer, horses, and bovines were the chief prey. These and other animals are abundantly represented in what is regarded as the most important artistic work of the Paleolithic era: the Franco-Cantabrian cave paintings of Altamira, located in the Cantabrian Cordillera. Other hunting and harvesting scenes can be found in the remarkable cave paintings of the Levant, which belong to the Neolithic period.

The scarce remains of fish and fishing-related tools suggest that this food was not common in the diet of prehistoric Iberian people. Fish remains found in archaeological sites were always fresh-water species.

Some archaeological digs, for example, Isturitz in the Basque Country or Atapuerca in Burgos, also attested to cannibalistic practices in this and in later stages (between 6,000 and 4,000 years ago). Outside the peninsula, traces of human bones that had been broken to extract the marrow were found in French and German sites dating from the Neolithic period.

However, vegetables, fruits, and roots, which have seldom left archaeological traces, were still the main food source. Remains of pine seeds, hazelnuts, acorns, walnuts, and endemic wild fruits such as blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, pears, plums, and olives have been found.

Evidence of the stabling of animals (goats, sheep, pigs, and bovines) as well as agricultural practices, ceramic making, and food storage (jugs, silos, etc.), date from a later period, between 7000 and 5000 B.C. The onset of the Neolithic period brought along greater independence from the environment and, above all, the possibility to settle permanently and to abandon, to a large extent, seasonal nomadism. The new production mode of such settlements was based on agriculture and livestock farming and it brought about the division of labor.

Among the grains cultivated from this time on were various kinds of wheat, rye, and oats (millet, which had been already known in Europe around 3000 B.C., made its appearance in the Iberian peninsula two thousand years later). Other cultivations included pulses (broad beans and peas), carob pods, dried fruits, fresh fruits (pears, apples, olives, wild grapes, figs), wild fruits, vegetables, roots, mushrooms, and snails. Vines were native to Mediterranean areas, but their cultivation did not become established in the Iberian Peninsula until the sixth century B.C., when the

Greeks imported them to their Iberian colonies and the Romans subsequently intensified the crops.

Evidence shows that the Canary Islands, the Atlantic Archipelago that lies opposite the northern coast of Africa, were not settled by the peoples of northeast Africa until the late Neolithic period. The resulting culture was called *guanche* and was specific to the Isle of Tenerife.

There, the diet mainly consisted of vegetables, seeds, fruits, wild fruits, and grains (chiefly wheat and rye). Grain flour was called *gofio* and it remains the main staple. They also ate animal products (milk and some varieties of cheese, and goat, boar, lamb, pigeon, and even dog meat). In coastal areas, shellfish and fish, such as the thick-lipped gray mullet, complemented the diet.

Apparently, the different parts of the peninsula first shared similar characteristics during the Eneolithic period, or Copper Age. The culture known as the "Bell-shaped vase" civilization, which owes its name to the shape of the ceramic pieces discovered, extended to most of the territory. Small game, such as rabbits, partridges, and other birds, as well as large game, such as deer and boars, were still an important source of food. Fish consumption increased and most species came from rivers (trout, eels, barbels, etc.) although sea shellfish were also collected. However, as a sedentary lifestyle increased and agriculture developed with the onset of the Eneolithic, or Copper Age, in the south of Portugal, eastern Andalucia, and Valencia, livestock farming became increasingly important. As a consequence, there was a rise in meat consumption (goat, pork, sheep, ox, etc.) to such an extent that, in Roman times, pigs became the most eaten animals. There are also records of sophisticated products, such as beer, dating from this period.

THE IBERIAN AGE

Around the year 1000 B.C., Indo-European tribes crossed the Pyrenees to settle in the Iberian Peninsula. They brought with them influential cultural elements, such as the dialects from which the Iberian and Celtiberian languages would later develop. They also introduced new foods, such as millet, lentils, and cabbage, as well as new agricultural techniques related to grain farming, storage methods, domesticated animals, and iron and advanced bronze techniques.

All these novelties would flourish and improve during the Iberian Bronze Age, between the sixth and second centuries B.C. At this time, the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, and Greeks founded their first colonies along

the present-day Spanish Mediterranean coast. This was the Iberians' first contact with more culturally developed civilizations.

The Phoenicians built Gadir (present-day Cadiz, the most ancient city in the West) and other settlements along the Andalucian coastline between the seventh and fifth centuries B.C., whereas the Carthaginians settled on the Isle of Ibiza.

The Greeks founded the colonies of Roses (Rhodes) and Ampurias (Emporion) on the northern coastline of present-day Catalonia in the fifth century B.C., immediately after the foundation of Massalia (Marseille, 600 B.C.). The life of local Iberian tribes was deeply affected by the presence of such cultures. The Phoenicians, important traders who, from their trading post of Gadir, exported food as far away as Athens, contributed to the development of a thriving Tartesian civilization. The Greeks influenced the production and storage systems of those tribes who lived near the Catalan coastline: as a consequence, from the fourth century B.C. onward, grain production was expanded and silos were built to facilitate trade with the Carthaginians and with the Greek colonies of Ampurias and Roses. The latter re-exported Iberian products, such as grains and honey, to other colonies or to Athens itself.

The Greek influence on agriculture was prominent: important products, such as wine, were introduced in the peninsula, as well as new crops, such as almond trees and grapes, whose wild varieties had been known since the Paleolithic era. Olive trees had also been known from ancient times, together with the oil-extracting technique, but only in the southern half of the peninsula and in the Mediterranean area. Greek cuisine, likewise, included typically Mediterranean elements, such as olive oil, grains and bread, wine, fish, and various meats, including poultry and rabbit.

Grains (mainly wheat, although barley and millet were also cultivated) were eaten in the form of bread, porridge, or soup. The consumption of domestic meat varieties (lamb, goat, pork, etc.) increased, whereas game progressively lost importance, although it still carried weight in the Iberians' diet (especially rabbits and deer). Meat was eaten roasted and, most often, boiled.

In coastal areas the Iberians also collected mollusks and already practiced some fishing.

Evidence shows that in the sixth century B.C., herding predominated over agriculture in some hamlets, but a hundred years later, this situation had been reversed. Such a change was crucial to the development of production as well as to the creation and development of settlements.

In the second half of the third century B.C., the Carthaginian imperialist campaigns, with the ensuing occupation of the south of the Peninsula, the foundation of Cartagena, and Hannibal's offensive against Rome in 219 B.C., triggered the Roman assault and the occupation and Romanization of the whole peninsula.

THE ROMAN AGE

The Romans entered the Iberian Peninsula from Greek colonies such as Ampurias, which served as the landing base for the first Roman expedition (218 B.C.). By the end of the second century B.C., after stifling the resistance of indigenous tribes and annihilating the Carthaginian offensive, the Romans definitively settled in the peninsula. Their expansion was relatively fast (Numancia, the last outstanding Iberian redoubt, was taken in the year 133 B.C.) and the degree of Romanization was high, except in some of the mountainous territories of the Basque-Cantabric cornice.

One of the first cities founded in Spain by the Romans was Itálica, situated five and half miles north of contemporary Seville and established in 206 B.C., and it blossomed rapidly as a military headquarters and a cultural center. At its peak, in the second and third centuries A.D., Itálica supported a population of several thousand. Both Roman Emperors Trajan and Hadrian were born there. Hadrian eventually bestowed imperial largesse on the city during his reign in the second century A.D., adding marble temples and important buildings. Itálica's amphitheater seated 25,000 spectators and was the third largest in the Roman Empire. Unlike other cities, nothing was built on top of Itálica in post-Roman times. Itálica is, therefore, beautifully preserved as a Roman city.

The Roman occupation brought deep changes in the social, political, and economic life of the peninsula. Urban life was affected by the building of a network of Roman roads and bridges that improved communications. Likewise, agriculture and productive methods advanced, and the occupied territory was turned into Roman Hispania.

Around the end of the first century B.C. rural houses *(villae)*, appeared. These were agricultural centers of production that extended and intensified crops, especially grains (the most appreciated ones were wheat and oats coming from Bética in eastern Andalucia), but also vines and olive trees.

The province of Bética, and to a lesser extent that of Tarragona, were important oil suppliers to Rome. The importance of such centers in this respect is somehow endorsed by the popular belief that the famous Mount

Testaccio in Rome was built in one hundred years by piling up the fragments of oil amphoras coming from the Bética province. Testimonies on the use of olive oil for frying, making sauces, and cooking vegetables and cakes can be found in the work of authors such as Horace, Juvenal, and Columella, the latter definitely Spanish, from Gades (the modern Cádiz).

Wine production was also widely extended at this time. While the Iberians had been in contact with Greece, their wine consumption had been scarce, partly due to the fact that special jugs and craters were needed for storage. For this reason, in most Iberian settlements beer had been the most popular drink. During the Roman age (from the first century B.C. onward), grape crops and wine production and consumption expanded considerably. Hispanic wines were highly appreciated for their quality and they were widely exported to Rome and Italy as well as to the colonies (especially to the near Galia).

The Latin author Martial, for example, praised the wine produced in the province of Tarragona, comparing it to the best wines of Italy. Wine was not consumed pure, as it is nowadays, but rather drunk hot or mixed with pine resin, dried fruits, aromatic herbs, honey, spices, or simply with water.

Food preservation was also boosted during the Roman age due to a more intensive use of the existing salting plants, particularly on the Mediterranean coastline. As a consequence, fish (especially tuna and mackerel) could be salted and thus preserved longer, and the fishery trade benefited from this preserving method.

It is worth mentioning, in this respect, the fish-based sauce called *garum*, a favorite of Roman gastronomy, which had previously belonged in the Greek cuisine. *Garum* was a liquid seasoning made from fermenting fish in saltwater. *Garum* produced in the area of Cartago Nova (present-day Cartagena, in the region of Murcia) was particularly appreciated in Rome. It had a strong taste and could be mixed with wine, oil, vinegar, or just water. Another, cheaper, variety was the *hallex*, a sort of half-rotten *garum*.

Salt also had other possible applications to food preserving. The various preparations of pork, salted and air-dried in drying plants, for example, were highly utilized. The ham from Ceretania, today's Cerdenya, in the north of Catalonia, which had already been praised by the poet Martial in the first century B.C., was a favorite, and the pigs bred in this area were considered to be of great quality. They fed on acorns and other wild fruits, just as they do nowadays in certain areas of Spain, such as Extremadura or the province of Salamanca.

Records of Roman stews can be found in the Roman Apicius's *De re coquinaria*, which includes numerous recipes of all kinds: lamb, kid, and chicken stews, popular pulse and vegetable preparations, fish in various sauces, and poultry (including cranes and peacocks).

Figs were certainly a favorite of both Romans and Greeks. They were left to dry in the sun and packed for exportation to Rome and Greece. Pears, pomegranates, and cherries from Lusitania, and Mediterranean grapes and raisins were also renowned, as well as the sweet olives that came from the areas of Emérita and Lusitania, which were dried in the sun and whose taste was even richer than that of raisins.

Among the novelties introduced from the East in Roman times were peaches, apricots, melons, and lemons. The latter were imported from Persia.

But for a few exceptions and despite the quality and fame of many of its products (wine, oil, *garum*, sausages, fruits, etc.) the Roman Hispanic cuisine seems to have been rather simple and detached from the culinary lavishness of the capital of the empire in Rome.

THE VISIGOTHIC KINGDOM

In the third century A.D., the Empire's deep crisis affected the Hispanic provinces, which were already undergoing a process of Christianization. The invasions of Germanic peoples (Suevi, Alani, and Vandals), which started in the year 408, put an end to the Roman rule in the Iberian Peninsula. The Visigoths, a Germanic tribe that was allied with Rome and was becoming increasingly Romanized, defeated the invaders and ended up settling permanently in the peninsula. When the Roman Empire disappeared in 476, the Visigoths began to create their own kingdoms in Galia and, later on, in Hispania. They eventually founded a Visigothic kingdom, which by the fifth century would already encompass most of the Iberian Peninsula, and established its capital in Toledo.

The arrival of the Visigoths in Hispania did not bring a serious break from the Roman food tradition, although there was a loss in variety and richness, both as far as products and recipes were concerned.

Both the *Liber ludiciorum*, a Visigothic legal compendium, and the *Chronicles of Saint Isidore of Seville* make numerous references to food during the Visigothic age.

The products consumed were basically the same as in the previous age, grains being the staple food. Records show that various kinds of bread were made: leavened and unleavened, dark, soft, and so forth. Livestock

were raised in large numbers and the most valued meats were pork, sheep, beef, poultry, and game. Fish was less valued, although both sea- and fresh-water species were eaten (salmon, to mention one).

The Visigoths learned from the Roman tradition how to cultivate lentils, broad beans, chickpeas, peas, lettuce, leeks, chard, squash, and radish, and how to use the Hispanic olive oil, a novelty in their Germanic diet, which was previously characterized by the use of animal fats. The most eaten fruits were apples, pomegranates, dates, peaches, pears, plums, grapes, figs, dried fruits, and nuts such as hazelnuts, almonds, chestnuts, walnuts, and acorns. Spices, which were brought from the East, were also highly valued, especially pepper, but also cinnamon, ginger, aromatic herbs, and saffron. The latter was already cultivated in the peninsula at that time and is still today an expensive crop that is grown using traditional techniques.

The Visigoths were fond of wine, produced in its different varieties: young, white, red, sweet, mixed with honey, herbs, and spices, or cooked. They also made apple cider and various kinds of beer. The favorite beer, called *celia,* was made from fermented wheat germ and later diluted and fermented again together with mild wine. Other alcoholic and alcohol-free drinks were made from honey (*hydromel, oxymeli, melicratum,* etc.).

FOOD IN ANDALUSIAN SPAIN

After the death of King Vitiza in 710, the Visigothic monarchy (which was not hereditary but elective) underwent an important succession crisis.

The Muslim Berbers of northern Africa, which were under the rule of the Caliph of Damascus, took advantage of this political weakness and entered Hispania in the year 711. Their expansion was fast and they occupied almost the entire Iberian Peninsula, except the Visigothic strongholds in northern Asturias and Cantabria and in the Basque mountains. They crossed over the Pyrenees and went on up to the French town of Poitiers, where they were eventually stopped. From this moment on, the Christians of the north started the reconquest of the peninsula, creating different Hispanic kingdoms and counties (Asturias, León, Galicia, Portugal, Castille, Navarra, Aragon, and the Catalan counties) and, little by little, they recovered the lost territories. The Emirate of Cordoba became independent in 756 and turned into an independent Caliphate in 929. The dismembering of the Caliphate of Cordoba into small kingdoms, called *taifas,* from 1031 on facilitated the Christian Reconquest. Yet, the

reconquest was rather slow, and the Muslims stayed in the Iberian Peninsula for over seven centuries, leaving a deep cultural legacy, especially in the south. Their influence on food practices, cooking, and cultivation techniques was also noteworthy and is still seen in many of the current food-related words belonging to Romance Spanish languages, such as Castilian, Catalan, and Galician.

However, Andalusi cooking is not as well known today as it could be wished for, though its legacy is present in many of the basic Spanish dishes, above all in the southern and eastern regions.

Grains, chiefly wheat, but also millet, barley, oats, rye, and grain sorghum were the base of Andalusian cooking. Besides the locally cultivated wheat, there are records of continuous importation of African wheat dating from the ninth century. The staple ingredient for flour was wheat, although millet, sorghum, starch, broad beans, and chickpeas were also used for making porridge and paps, bread (leavened or unleavened), cakes, and pastry (sponge cakes, buns, doughnuts, fritters, and puff pastry). Wheat semolina also played an important role in some dishes.

In the ninth century, Abou-I-Hassan, known as Ziryab (a musician arrived from Damascus, who imported all the refinements of that court), made his quasi-mythical appearance at the Court of Cordoba. Besides introducing asparagus, he brought a sort of revolution in the practices and manners of the Cordobese court. Music, attire, and food underwent radical changes as he introduced the refinements, table etiquette, and equipment of Eastern cooking. These included the order that courses had to be served, which was the following: cold starters, meat and poultry, hors d'oeuvres, pastas and couscous, soups, and then pies, cakes, and other sweet desserts. Before Ziryab's arrival all the courses were served at once, without order, and people chose according to their own taste. This was also the way food was eaten in the Christian West and it would remain unchanged for most of the Middle Ages.

The extensive cultivations of olive trees were almost exclusively devoted to the making of olive oil. Excess produce was destined for exportation.

Broad beans, chickpeas, lentils, and lupines were the pulse varieties that stood out, and vegetables such as lettuce, chard, artichokes, spinach, cucumbers, onions, garlic, eggplants, turnips, leeks, celery, and squash were also intensively cultivated in Al-Andalus (Arabic for Andalusia). Many contemporary words—not only of plants and vegetables—in Spanish have an Arabic origin, such as *alcachofas* (artichokes), *berenjenas* (eggplants; *albergínies* in Catalan), *aceite* (oil), *alubias* (beans), and so forth.

Fruits were considered like sweets to be eaten on special festivities and occasions and were not regarded as nutritious foodstuffs. The most eaten fruits were apricots, peaches, lemons, watermelons, figs, pomegranates, *membrillos* (quinces), grapes, apples, and dried fruits and nuts, such as raisins, almonds, acorns, palm hearts, and dates (it was thanks to the Muslims that the date palm became acclimated in the peninsula: the largest palm grove in Europe can be found today in the town of Elche, in eastern Spain). Although rice was not imported by the Arabs and had already been known in previous ages, rice farming was improved in this period due to their advancement in water technology, which made extensive irrigation farming possible in eastern Spain.

Milk and dairy products, such as cheese, were largely emphasized in Andalusian cooking, and they were basic in many popular recipes, such as fresh cheese fritters.

Meat, however, seems to have been a relatively scarce food. It was considered a luxury and was not always affordable for the less wealthy population. The most widely eaten meats were poultry (chickens, hens, pigeons, ducks), quail chickens, cranes, rabbit, ram, and lamb (the latter was common during important festivities, like that of Aid-el-kbir). Just as Christians did with pigs, these peoples used almost every part of rams: their tallow, their meat (which was roasted, dried, salted, and preserved in the form of jerky and sausages), their entrails, and their heads, which were baked in an earthen oven. The animals were slaughtered according to the rules of the Koran, the Islamic holy book: facing Mecca, the site of pilgrimages, their throats were slit with one deep slash performed by the hand of a purified person who had been socially accepted for this task. The animal was left to bleed afterward.

Lamb and *Membrillo* (Quince) Stew

Ingredients

- lean lamb meat
- garlic clove
- pepper to taste
- pinch of saffron
- olive oil
- salt
- onion
- *membrillo* (quince)
- pinch of cinnamon

- some sugar
- handful of currants

Preparation
Salt the meat and then fry it in olive oil until it is browned. Cover it with water and add the garlic clove and onion, cleaned and whole (to prevent them from melting), the pepper, the salt, saffron to taste, and the currants. Cook on low heat for approximately 20 minutes. Meanwhile, cut the *membrillo* (quince) into four wedges without separating them completely and boil for a few minutes in a little water. When it is ready, sprinkle with cinnamon, sugar, and a touch of pepper. Serve the meat on a dish with bits of *membrillo*.

Andalusian cooking was always open to the influence of other cuisines, such as the ones of the Christian North and, in turn, it influenced them. The result was the creation of tasty dishes that melded both traditions, such as the *puchero* or *olla* (meaning "hotpot" and "stew," but today almost exclusively referring to food) in all its peninsular varieties: Andalusian and Castilian stews, including the ones made in Madrid and Valencia, and the Catalan *escudella i carn d'olla* (stew with meat), which are related to Arabic dishes such as couscous. Another example of the encounter of the two traditions is the nougat from Alicante, a typical Arabic dessert made from honey and almonds, which, through the centuries, ended up becoming the dessert of the Christian festivity par excellence: Christmas.

Partly in keeping with the tradition that had developed on the Mediterranean coastline (Malaga and Almuñecar, for example) since the Phoenician period, bluefish was largely eaten both fresh (sardines) and salted or preserved in the form of dried and salted tuna *(mojama)*, tuna roe, or albacore tuna in spiced marinade.

In the Iberian Peninsula, due to the use of Eastern spices, these preparations became progressively milder until they acquired a delicate taste. The most used aromatic herbs were fennel, basil, coriander, caraway, mint, and rosemary, as well as local spices, such as saffron, which is largely cultivated in the south and the east of the peninsula, and also pepper and cinnamon.

Grape crops were still important in Al-Andalus. Grapes were eaten fresh, whereas sweet, cooked must was used for making *sapa*, a boiled-down syrup that, like honey, was used as sweetener.

Despite the Koranic prohibition of alcohol otherwise observed in Muslim Andalusian cooking, wine production was continued, and the drink kept being consumed, commercialized, and even praised by many poets.

Marketplaces played an important role in the purchase of food, as still happens today in many Arabic towns and villages. They were very popular, and almost all the necessary foodstuffs could be acquired there, including the "illicit" ones like wine, because it was consumed both by Jews and Mozarabic Christians (Christians living in the Iberian Muslim area).

Jewish communities had been present in the Iberian Peninsula from Roman times. These Hispanic communities were called "Sephardic" (from Hebraic "Sepharad": Spain). As for the Muslims, pork meat—but not wine—was a prohibited food, and olive oil was very common in the Sephardic cuisine. From the Middle Ages on, pork became an important cultural marker, because it was a food eaten uniquely by Christians. Christians were divided into two different groups: *old* Christians (who actually ate pork), and *new* Christians (that is, Muslims and Jews who had converted to Christianity and avoided consuming pork despite their conversion).

THE MIDDLE AGES

The Emirate and, subsequently, the Caliphate of Cordoba and the Muslim kingdoms reached their apogee and then entered a phase of decline and military retreat as the Christian kingdoms of the north progressively gained ground and became more solidly established. The Christians' military strength increased as they recovered the southern territories of the peninsula.

Various kingdoms were slowly created through matrimonial alliances and warfare policies and they became increasingly powerful: the independent county of Castille became a kingdom in 1035 and absorbed other territories (León and Galicia), whereas Portugal became independent in the twelfth century, keeping out of the orbit. The kingdom of Navarra would not be annexed until well into the sixteenth century. In the northeast, the Catalan counties, which had become independent from the French Empire, joined the kingdom of Aragon, a strong state that would further expand into the Mediterranean (to the Balearic Islands, Languedoc, Provence, Corsica, Sardinia, southern Italy, and even Athens and Neopatria in Greece).

During the Late Middle Ages, a remarkable phenomenon took place in the Christian area: the population grew along with the expansion to the south and agricultural exploitations increased. Markets consolidated and so did the interaction between the urban and rural world and the international relationships. However, during the Middle Ages the growing popu-

lation did not always rely on steady food supplies and had to face various periods of crisis and scarcity. These were aggravated by a feudal structure that was based on an ever-growing gap between high and low social strata.

The sources of food supply varied enormously from city to country because city dwellers relied on the market, whereas rural inhabitants tended to be self-sufficient, when possible, and bought from the markets only what could not be produced or obtained by their own means.

Vegetables and grains (chief ingredients of popular dishes such as vegetable hodge-podge and stews), together with bread were the main staples of the masses, who did not enjoy much variety of foods. Meat became a prerogative of privileged classes and thus, a sign of distinction and power. Although the broadening of international commerce facilitated the importation of wheat crops from other areas, supplies failed during the frequent periods of scarcity. At this time the *Sent Soví,* the most important Catalan cookbook appeared—the oldest cookbook in Spain, and one of the oldest and most important in Europe.

The bubonic plague, in the year 1348, exacerbated the already difficult situation and caused a heavy demographic loss. The subsequent loss of workers resulted, on one hand, in a fall in agricultural production, and on the other, in a moderate rise in livestock farming, although the animals in question were the least expensive (goat, sheep, pigs) and in general, quantities were not abundant.

Lamb was reserved for important occasions and, among birds, poultry were more frequently eaten than wild species.

Meat was most often boiled with spices and herbs, to make it softer and to improve its taste. The lack of fresh meat was compensated by the masses with the consumption of pulses and vegetables (onion, cabbage, lentils, broad beans, etc.) and especially of bread. Nuts were also eaten. Pine nuts, hazelnuts, and above all almonds, were used for various culinary applications. Vegetables, such as squash, turnips, chard, cucumbers, and borage were less frequently used. Wild aromatic herbs such as thyme, rosemary, sage, bay leaf, and fennel were the main seasoning ingredients. Honey was the sweetener par excellence, and it was used on special occasions to prepare cakes and pastries.

Menjar Blanc (White Dish)

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup of rice flour
- almond milk (2 tbs. of ground almonds blended in a 1/2 cup of hot water)

- 3 tbs. sugar
- 1 tbs. rosewater
- cinnamon

Preparation
Blend the rice flour with cold water to a smooth, thin paste. Gradually, add almond milk to rice flour mixture, stirring constantly. Slowly, bring to a boil over moderate heat, stirring frequently. Add the sugar and cook for about 12 minutes. Stir in rosewater and remove from heat. Pour into a serving bowl or mold. Serve with cinnamon sprinkled on top.

Local wine was a euphoriant and mostly unrefined. It was widely drunk, although watered-down vinegar was also a refreshing drink then. In this period, uncommon nutritious and therapeutic qualities were attributed to wine (and to meat, too); it was given to patients in hospitals and it was used for making medicines.

Fruit was still considered a superfluous and luxury foodstuff. It was scarcely eaten by lower classes and the elite did not eat it in abundance, either.

The diet of this period also included cheese, eggs, and fish (often salted, for preserving). With the exception of sardines and tuna, fish was expensive and there was not much variety, not even in sea towns. Fish was, in any case, less popular than meat, as it was believed to be of inferior quality. It was mainly associated with religious penitence and ecclesiastical imposition, rather than with gastronomic enjoyment.

During the recurrent periods of scarcity the diet of less privileged classes dramatically changed and included less habitual foods, such as wild fruits and seeds, roots, bracken, sweet sorghum (usually reserved for animals), and even bark and the ground shell of dried fruits.

As for game, it progressively lost importance as the Middle Ages approached their end.

THE ARRIVAL OF FOOD FROM THE AMERICAS

The end of the Middle Ages and the onset of the Renaissance thought characteristic of the modern age coincided, in Spain, with various significant events.

The Canary Islands, which from the fourteenth century onward had been visited in succession by the Genoese, the Catalan-Aragonese of Mallorca, the Portuguese, and the Normans, definitively came under Castilian sovereignty by the end of the fifteenth century. The reconquest

was also completed in 1492, as the last Muslim kingdom of the Iberian Peninsula, Granada, was conquered. The "Expulsion" of the Spanish Jews (Sephardi) from the Iberian Peninsula, and the beginning of the Sephardi Diaspora also occurred in 1492. The Sephardi people took their language and their kitchen around the world.

Probably, the most significant event as far as food is concerned was the encounter between two worlds as, also in 1492, the expeditions financed by the Crown of Castille reached the Antilles and the American continents. The consequence was a worldwide food revolution in which the European passion for spices played an important role.

Other momentous political changes in the sixteenth century would take place on one hand, when the Castilian and Catalan-Aragonese Crowns, the French County, Flanders, and the Low Countries became part of the German Empire under the rule of Emperor Charles I, who started the Habsburg dynasty. On the other, when the Aragonese-Catalan domain extended to Italy the reciprocal food influences were remarkable.

Eventually, when the kingdom of Navarra joined the Castilian Crown in 1512, almost all the peninsula came under the rule of one monarch except Portugal, which was part of the empire only from 1580 to 1668. All these territories kept, however, their internal autonomy, currency, borders, and tolls. A definitive political union under a centralized state would not exist until well into the eighteenth century, when the Bourbon dynasty came to the throne.

The arrival of food from the Americas represented a turning point in European food history. Spain, which became the metropolis of an increasing number of conquered territories, was the venue by which the new foodstuffs were introduced. The acceptance and use of food varied according to time and place, though. For example, vegetables, such as peppers, were widely and quickly accepted, whereas it took years before tomatoes were introduced in the culinary and food practices of Spain and Europe at large.

The arrival of food from the Americas in Spain, and hence in Europe, coincided with the exportation of European foodstuffs to the Americas. Among the exported foods were Mediterranean wheat and vines, which acclimatized in the new Western lands. As for olive trees, they adapted to the New World at first but were subsequently prohibited by the metropolis, a situation that would not change until the nineteenth century. This cross-trade significantly affected the European Hispano-American population, who did not always accommodate their taste to local food and practices and continued to consume imported Spanish food. The latter

became an ethnic marker that separated original Spaniards from native Americans. Highly caloric foodstuffs, such as potatoes and maize, were only partially incorporated in the diets of the Europeans, except in those of the less privileged classes who, having no access to imported items, had to adapt to local food.

European products were imported not only into the New World, but also into the recently colonized Canary Islands. Bread, for example, was imported from the peninsula in 1478, together with grain crops such as wheat, and vinegar, pulses, and sugar. Around the year 1500, the first cows made their appearance on the islands, followed by wool sheep and poultry, some fruit-bearing trees, and vegetables (e.g., eggplant, cucumbers, cabbage, squash, turnips, melons, lettuce, onions, and broad beans).

From the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries onward, the islands turned into a major center for the production of high quality sugar cane. This crop moved from the Mediterranean to the Portuguese Atlantic Islands (mainly Madeira) and over to the Canary Islands. New World products progressively found their place within the Spanish food system. In most cases this happened thanks mostly to the lower classes who, in times of crisis, were less reluctant to try and introduce new foodstuffs in their diet. Thus, some vegetables, such as potatoes and beans, became the staple subsistence food and joined or replaced the existing traditional products and the local recipes and culinary lore. Potatoes, for example, and to a lesser extent beans, were easily incorporated in the various stews that were typical of Spanish cuisine, replacing other ingredients, such as chestnuts, eggplants, and even chickpeas. The introduction of products such as potatoes was not easy, though, and no precise date is associated to the beginning of its urban consumption, although it is known that, at first, potatoes were used by the poorest people and in barracks, prisons, hospitals, and poorhouses.

If foodstuffs such as tomatoes, peppers, and potatoes came to be considered as "local" products, it was due to their fulfillment of certain necessary expectations: first, their good acclimatization; second, their easy integration into the local food culture and recipes; and last, but not least, their sensory qualities (taste, color, and texture). To become part of the food practices of a society, a food of this kind must easily adapt to the ecosystem. Yet, it must also necessarily offer a certain degree of economic and nutritional advantages and, above all, it is essential for it to fit into the imaginary and the representational system of the society in question. As far as the Spanish case is concerned, some products integrated more or less

easily, whereas others, such as maize, were not really incorporated into Spanish culture and food habits, as they were, for example, in France and northern Italy.

The differences between the upper and the lower classes were even greater in this period, known in Spain as "the golden age." On one hand, the overseas enterprises in general and the favorable political situation of the empire in Europe brought good economic times for the monarchy, the nobles, and the trading bourgeoisie alike. Such wealth is proved by the unprecedented abundance of food and the development of an exquisite courtly cuisine. Meat (poultry and wild birds, big and small game, pork and sausage, veal and ram, the latter particularly appreciated) was abundant and so were sweet desserts and fruits, whereas there was less variety of fish (mainly trout, but also tuna, eel, and barbel) and of vegetables, which were mostly eaten as an accompaniment to meat dishes. Whenever possible, the diet was highly caloric and the most valued foods were meat and sweets.

Around 1518 to 1520, in Catalonia and in the Catalan language, the Rupert of Nola's cookbook *Llibre de Coch,* appeared. It was published later in the Castilian language. In the following decades, other elaborate books on cuisine appeared. Later, *El libro del arte de cozina* (*Book of the Art of Cuisine;* Salamanca, 1607) and the well-known *El Arte de Cozina, Pastelería y Vizcochería y Conservería* (*The Art of Cuisine, Baking, Patisserie, and Conserving;* 1611) by Francisco Martínez Montiño, were published.

On the other hand, the less privileged classes suffered more directly from social problems, wars, and famine, and their options when it came to obtaining food were far fewer than those of the more powerful social strata. In their diet, the most important foods were bread and soups with various ingredients (vegetables, herbs, bread, bones, offal), whereas meat was scarce and, if eaten at all, it belonged to lesser quality animals (goats, pigs, poultry) and usually consisted of the less valued parts of these. In coastal areas there was more fish (sardines, especially those fished in Galicia, and tuna), although it was not eaten in abundance, together with vegetables and herbs, eggs, cheese and cottage cheese, olives, milk, fruit, and local wine.

The richest banquets took place on festive occasions and celebrations during which meat was more abundant (cooked on a skewer, for example). The main animals eaten were young bulls, pigs, small game (rabbits and hares, partridges, etc.), and poultry such as chickens, hens, ganders, and turkeys, which had been introduced from the Americas. Another fes-

tive food was the so-called *olla podrida* (literally, "rotten pot"), a typical stew with a wide variety of ingredients. The *olla podrida* may be considered to have been, during the golden age, the national dish par excellence in the Iberian Peninsula. Today it exists in various permutations in the various regional stews (Madrid, Andalucian, and Catalan *escudella*). All these foods were accompanied by local wine.

As mentioned, wine consumption was mostly local because the high transportation fares prevented it from being traded on a large scale. The most distinguished wines under the Crown came from Andalucia (Jerez, Cazalla, Constantina, etc.), La Mancha (Toledo and Ciudad Real), Madrid (which supplied the Court with renowned wines, such as San Martín de Valdeiglesias, Pinto, or Valdemoro), Castilla la Vieja, León, Extremadura, and the Canary Islands, which provided excellent malmseys.

The wines from Catalonia and the Levant, as well as those from Aragon (Cariñena and Calatayud, for example), were particularly renowned in the Catalan-Aragonese territories. Other wine-based popular drinks were the *hipocrás* (made from mature wine, sugar, cinnamon, ambar, and musk), the *carraspada* (watered-down wine cooked with honey and spices), and a similar preparation called *aloja*. Other types of alcoholic drinks were various eau-de-vie and aromatic waters made from anise, cinnamon, orange flower, and lemon, as well as sorbets. In the Levant, people also drank *horchata de chufa* or tigernut milk (made from the juice of the *cyperus esculentus sativus* tuber), a sweet drink typical of the area of Valencia. Beer began to be brewed in the sixteenth century, when Emperor Charles I, and later on his son Philip II, invited German brewers to move to the peninsula. Yet beer consumption did not consolidate until the seventeenth century and the drink would not become popular until the end of the nineteenth century.

Among the foods imported from the New World, chocolate was a unique case, because it was immediately accepted. It was introduced in the Iberian Peninsula in 1520, and its consumption quickly increased, especially among the wealthier strata of the population, as soon as sugar began to be added to its preparation. The indigenous use of chocolate was quite different, as cocoa was mixed with spicy and bitter ingredients.

Such was its popularity that, as early as at the beginning of the seventeenth century, there were already mills devoted to its making. In the eighteenth century, when chocolate became more solidly established in the rest of Europe, especially in Italy and France, this sweetened preparation became known as "Spanish chocolate."

THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

The Spanish kingdoms underwent a severe crisis in the seventeenth century. The population decreased and the labor force along with it. In addition, as a consequence of the expulsion of the Morisco people—the Muslim population who had converted to Christianity—in 1609, the agricultural crisis was aggravated. Trade with the New World also suffered from an internal crisis in the same period, due to the increasing commercial intervention of other countries. This, together with monetary inflation, created a rather difficult economic situation. To make things worse, there was no unity in the foreign policies of the various kingdoms, which enjoyed considerable internal and external autonomy despite being united under one crown.

The whole century was characterized by a succession of domestic revolutions. In 1640, Catalonia revolted against Spain and placed itself under the protection of Louis XIII of France, but the revolt was quelled in the 1650s. As a consequence, the north of Catalonia (Roussillon and Cerdagne) was lost and the borders between the two countries shifted upward to the Pyrenees. At the same time, Portugal obtained its independence. The Habsburg dynasty ended and paved the way for a restless eighteenth century, marked by the War of the Spanish Succession. Eventually, after years of internal fighting, the French Bourbon dynasty gained access to the throne (1701–1714). Their victory meant the end of the Habsburg dynasty and, for the first time, the beginning of a centralized regime at the Court of King Philip V in Madrid. Consequently, Spain entered within the French area of influence and underwent institutional and jurisdictional restructuring, becoming what could be called a proper "Spanish State." Yet this was achieved with considerable losses, such as those of Gibraltar and the Isle of Menorca, which passed into British hands (Menorca only temporarily, whereas Gibraltar is still today under British rule), a change that brought along severe internal impoverishment and malaise. The apogee of this century, politically and culturally speaking, corresponded to the "enlightened" monarchy of Charles III (1759–1788).

As can be appreciated, this historical moment was pregnant with transformations, which were also reflected in the food. On one hand, the access to the throne on the part of the Bourbon dynasty brought a distinctive French influence on courtesan food habits, as well as on a small part of the bourgeoisie. On the other, the rest of Spanish society still clung to traditional dishes and practices.

In the sixteenth century, culinary influences had traveled from the Iberian Peninsula toward France. Among the foods introduced from Spain were sugar and eau-de-vie, both already used by Spanish people during the Middle Ages, as well as New World products such as tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, maize, and chocolate, which became progressively popular in France, together with other exciting infusions such as tea and coffee.

In the eighteenth century this tendency was reversed and France became the country that represented the culinary norm: the simplification and refinement of stews—the base of today's cuisine—the variety of the ingredients, and the harmony of the dishes became, from this time on, the most significant trend.

In the eighteenth century there was a certain continuity as far as the abundance of meat is concerned, although poultry consumption increased to the detriment of other meats. Fish was hardly eaten (mainly when Lent made it mandatory), whereas sweet desserts were abundant. Popular cuisine was still based on the stew "pot" (with hen and few other meats), soup, pork, and sausage and, when possible, some vegetables, and a little fruit and fish in coastal areas (salted cod played an important role, especially during Lent). In the Cantabrian area, apple cider became an important drink. Most of the products coming from the New World started to definitively integrate in the different Spanish cuisines. Peppers had been accepted relatively easily in the seventeenth century, but other foods, such as tomatoes and potatoes, were steadily incorporated in the diet only from the eighteenth century onward.

The Spanish painter Luis Meléndez (born in Naples in 1716) perfected the still life genre in this era. In his paintings, he reflected the Spanish food of his time, frequently including some New World products, such as tomatoes and chocolate.

Peix amb Suc (Fish in Sauce)

Ingredients

- 4 large slices of dusky sea perch (or 8 small ones)
- 2 tomatoes
- 1 onion
- 4 garlic cloves
- parsley
- salt to taste
- olive oil

- flour for coating fish
- a potful of stock (made from the fish head)

Preparation
Peel and dice the onion, and sauté together with garlic cloves, chopped up tomatoes, and some finely chopped parsley in the oil. In the meantime, prepare some stock by boiling the fish head with a little salt. Once the onion, garlic, and tomatoes are ready, cover them with the stock and leave on the burner to thicken. Season and flour the fish slices, place them in an earthen casserole, and coat with the sauce, which had been previously sieved. Let it cook on the stove top, in the earthen casserole, on medium heat for about 15 minutes and serve.

The population explosions that took place in the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth century in Western Europe were bound to the process of modernization. This phenomenon acquired extraordinary dimensions and was accompanied by a notable decrease in mortality rates and a rise in birth rates. In this sense, the nineteenth century may be considered the century of urban development, industrial projection, migrations, and the beginning of tourism, hotels, and catering.

The nineteenth century, just as the last, started and ended with a crisis and a war. The dynastic crisis in 1808 paved the way for the Napoleonic invasion and the access to the throne of José I Bonaparte, who reigned until the definitive expulsion of the French in 1813, and the return of the Bourbon Fernando VII.

The need for modernization in a country that was anchored in the old regime resulted in a clash between reformation initiatives and absolutist monarchy. The domestic social and economic crisis was aggravated by the loss of the American colonies in 1828 and it eventually led to a progressive liberalization and the beginning of an innovative industrial revolution in the northern regions of the peninsula (especially in Catalonia, with the development of textile industries, and in the Basque Country with the rise of heavy industry). Progressists, democrats, and liberals overthrew Queen Isabel II in 1868. Subsequently, there was a short period of rule under King Amadeo I of Savoia, followed by the First Spanish Republic, which lasted from 1873 to 1874. Afterward, Alfonso XII restored the Bourbon dynasty. His reign was characterized by great social unrest and by the definitive loss, in 1898, of the remaining Spanish colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and the islands of the Pacific, as a consequence of the war against the United States.

The nineteenth century was characterized by urban growth and the increase of the industrial proletariat, especially in the most industrialized

areas of the peninsula (Catalonia, the Basque Country, and the Cantabrian Cornice). Production centered on textiles (Catalonia), the metal industry (Basque Country), and mining (Asturias, Cantabria, and other areas). The food industry (flour, biscuits, alcohol, chocolate, sausage, etc.) followed at some distance, although it became increasingly strong through the century and grew to be considerably important in the last decade.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the country had already received European immigrants: namely French and Italians who had immigrated to Catalonia and had left their mark in cooking, as many of them were renowned caterers. From the end of the nineteenth century onward, a new migratory phenomenon began and would continue and increase in the twentieth century: people started to move from the poorest and most rural areas of the peninsula toward the industrialized regions. With immigration, cities such as Barcelona, Bilbao, and Madrid experienced an unprecedented growth.

The deep gap between the gastronomic and technological refinements of the bourgeoisie and the impoverishment of the lower classes still existed, but at the same time the growing cities became centers of cultural expansion and the ideal milieu for multicultural bonds.

It was the case, for example, of Barcelona, a city that became increasingly cosmopolitan and whose cuisine boasted, apart from the traditional Catalan dishes, of inland Valencian, French, and Italian influences. Catalan cooking is, perhaps, the regional Spanish cuisine that has created its own tradition, incorporating and adapting Italian pasta dishes.

Such tradition spread from the typical inns *(fondas)* and, above all, from the Italian-style restaurants of nineteenth century middle-class Barcelona, fond of cannelloni and opera. Certainly, cannelloni were a typical dish of family meetings. Special pasta recipes already existed in Catalonia in the nineteenth century, but pasta was more commonly eaten by laborers and craftsmen.

The daily diet of laborers included few meat proteins (some lesser valued parts of pork meat, such as bacon), vegetables (cabbage, beans, onions, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, and maize flour), typical peninsular soups and stews, salted fish such as herring, bread, and some wine.

The nineteenth century was also characterized by large, covered markets, which could be found in all peninsular cities in general, although Barcelona was outstanding in this respect, with the *Sant Antoni, Born,* and *Boquería* markets, among others.

As for *haute cuisine,* Spain was under the direct influence of France. Most of the cookbooks printed in this period were influenced by French

cuisine or were direct translations from French. Thus, there was a considerable contrast between the most affluent and the lowest classes in terms of food consumption, and indeed more records have been left on the elite.

As the century advanced, however, the folkloric boom led to the appreciation of popular, mainly rural, culture and within this, gastronomy obviously played an important role. At this time were born some of the most outstanding Iberian dishes, for example, the Catalan *pa amb tomàquet* (bread slices rubbed with tomato, with or without garlic, and dressed with olive oil and salt), the international *paella* (Catalan word meaning



La Boquería market in Barcelona, one of the most important markets in Europe.



Paella cooking in a large pan, North Catalonia.

frying pan and referring to the large pan where the rice was cooked), and *arròs en paella* (rice in *paella*) eaten by Valencian peasants and laborers.

Paella (Rice in *Paella*)

Ingredients

- rice (*paella* rice, arborio, or short-grain) (handful per serving plus some extra ones *or* 1 cup will serve 3–4 people)
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 chopped onion
- 1 chopped tomato
- 1 lb. pork loin ribs
- 1 small rabbit or chicken cut up
- 1/2 cup peas
- 1/2 cup chopped green beans

- 1 pinch saffron threads
- 1 tsp. salt or to taste
- olive oil
- water (enough to double the quantity of the rice)

Preparation

Sauté the meat (ribs, rabbit, and/or chicken) in a *paella* (typical metal pan, round, flat, and with two handles) with some oil. When the meat is browned, add the chopped onion, peas, beans, whole garlic cloves, and, last the chopped tomato. Add the water to the mixture and bring to a boil. Add the rice and put on high heat. After a few minutes, add the saffron. The rice must cook on medium heat for about 20 minutes uncovered until all the water has been absorbed. Once ready, cover the *paella* with a cotton cloth, let it sit for 5 minutes and then serve.

Note

This recipe follows the traditional Valencian preparation. Different kinds of *paella* may be made using other ingredients: fish, shellfish, snails, meat, vegetables, or even "mix *paella*," the most popular with tourists, which blends in one recipe all the other kinds (meat, vegetables, fish, and shellfish).

As mentioned, the nineteenth century also witnessed the definitive popularization of those foods that were introduced in the diet in the eighteenth century, such as tomatoes. Yet, in non-Mediterranean regions in the north of Spain, some common products were integrated into the food system much later. Rice, for instance, was not customarily used there until the end of the nineteenth century and some vegetables, such as carrots, eggplants, and zucchini, were eaten only well into the twentieth century. The following foods could be found in a Spanish popular market of the nineteenth century: pulses and vegetables (chickpeas, beans, lentils, peas, tender green beans and broad beans, squash, artichokes, spinach, asparagus, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, garlic), fruit (also used as vegetables and as ingredients in sauces: pears, apples, peaches, bitter oranges and lemons, pomegranates, *membrillos*—quinces), dried fruits and nuts (raisins and prunes, pine seeds, almonds, walnuts), various kinds of meat (pork, poultry and lamb were, respectively, the most popular, the most expensive, and the most appreciated ones), fish (fresh fish such as anglerfish, hake, conger, grouper, sturgeon, and barbel, as well as salted fish, especially cod, but also herring, anchovies, tuna, and others that can be still found today), dairy products such as cheese, various herbs and spices, wines and spirits, and even animal species that are nowadays protected, such as the turtle.

A TURBULENT TWENTIETH CENTURY

The nineteenth century finished with the end of the first Spanish Republic, the restoration of the monarchy under King Alfonso XII and, already in 1898, the final crisis following the Spanish-American War and the loss of the American, Asian, and Pacific colonies. During the twentieth century, the labor movements (socialism, anarchism, and, later on, communism) and nationalist movements (chiefly the Catalan, but also the Galician and Andalucian ones) developed up to the end of the Spanish Civil War and became stronger. The colonial policies of the new century focused on Equatorial Guinea and especially on Morocco. Here the Berbers' revolts triggered a military intervention that brought serious social and political consequences.

The industrializing process and urban development continued, and so did the large domestic migratory movements to Barcelona, Madrid, Bilbao, and other large cities. Europe fought from 1914 to 1917 in World War I, while Spain remained neutral. In 1923, following the example of contemporary Italian fascism, a fascist-like dictatorship was established in Spain. Its downfall in 1930 led, some time later, to the fall of the Monarchy of Alfonso XII and the establishment of the second Spanish Republic. The Republic was founded on democratic and progressive principles and it introduced a new constitution and universal suffrage, as well as Statutes of Autonomy for Catalonia, the Basque Country, and, later on, Galicia.

The climax of fascism in Europe and the domestic weakness of the Republic contributed to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), the most painful event in twentieth-century Spain. The war ended with the victory of the national faction, led by General Francisco Franco, and with the establishment of a new dictatorship that would last 40 years, until his death in 1975. The period after the war was rather hard. It coincided with World War II, during which Spain was again neutral, and it was marked by hunger, economic difficulties, and heavy migrations from the south of the peninsula (Andalucia, Extremadura, Murcia, La Mancha) toward the more industrialized and prosperous regions of the north (Catalonia and Basque Country), the center (Madrid), Western Europe, and South America.

Between the 1950s and the 1960s the north of the peninsula reached its apogee in terms of development and industrialization, and tourism became one of the most important economic sectors of the country.

After the death of Franco, Spain became a democracy again, and the monarchy was restored with a new constitution under King Juan Carlos I (1978).

From this point on, Spain underwent an overall process of territorial restructuring and state decentralization; Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia recovered their autonomy, and at the same time 14 other autonomous regions were created.[1]

In 1986, Spain and Portugal entered the European Economic Community. Spain experienced unprecedented economic growth and became one of the engines of the current European Union.

All these social and political events were directly reflected in the Spanish food trajectory. French influence in the culinary field, especially in *haute cuisine,* was still strong, although folkloric and ethnographic initiatives that had already existed in the previous century were enhanced in order to recover the popular old recipes of the various Spanish regions. The cookbook of Countess de Pardo Bazán (1913) is an example of this trend.

The differences between the high and low classes and between rural and urban milieu still existed during this period.

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War had gravely affected the Spanish social framework. A large portion of society suffered from hunger, especially the lower strata of the population, as scarcity and rationing became the norm during the war years. Food shortage also extended to the postwar period and under the dictatorial regime, the country found itself politically and socially isolated from the rest of Europe and the world at large. The fascist ultranationalism defended the "Spanish essence" in all fields, including the culinary one, and promoted a unifying "typification" of Spanish cooking, excluding any foreign influence or new tendencies that might arise in Europe.

At the popular level, however, and without considering the remarkable scarcity during the Civil War and the postwar periods, there was continuity as to the kind of foods eaten: wheat and its by-products (especially bread), vegetables, olive oil and lard, pork by-products and sausage, some meat, herbs (parsley, garlic, onion), and so forth. Cooking methods also remained unaltered. Food was boiled, stewed, and fried to prepare the traditional dishes: soups, stews, hotpots, *migas* (popular dish with the main ingredient of breadcrumbs), and porridge. The typical menu of the urban middle and lower labor classes might be as follows: vegetables, pulses, fruit and salads, some meat (broiled, grilled, in the form of sausage, or as an ingredient for stews), sardines and cod, olive oil, abundant bread, and eggs. The quantity and quality of meat proportionally increased with family income.

As far as daily food routines are concerned, in the first half of the twentieth century the main meal was eaten in the evening and it usually con-

sisted of a stew, but in the second half of the century practices changed, due to various reasons: electricity spread to both urban and rural areas, cars became the main transportation means for the family unit, working hours were regularized and reduced, electric household equipment (television, among others), and food technology (freezers and microwaves) reached every home, and women were incorporated into the labor market. All these factors considerably altered eating times, commensality, and type of foods, the main change being a shift of the main meal to lunchtime. Spaniards started to go to bed later and to eat out more frequently, especially at lunchtime, as a consequence of their working schedule and their distance from work. As the living standard increased, evening meals in restaurants became more common too. Even so, those who eat out usually do so choosing *traditional menus* (which include a main course, second course, dessert, and coffee), instead of consuming snacks and sandwiches, as is common in northern European countries. The time devoted by Spanish workers to lunch break (usually between 1:30 and 2:30) is also usually longer than that of their northern counterparts.

Most products are available all year round due to various factors, such as safety and hygiene regulations, food preservation technologies, independence of agriculture from local cultivations and seasons, effective and large-scale distribution, and generalized reduction in price of certain foods. The drawback of such development is that some products have lost variety, quality, and taste. Prepared and precooked foods have found their way into the domestic world, adapting to the new social needs and to people's timetables. Consumption of commercial cakes and pastries has also increased considerably.

From the official data provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food, it can be deduced that the Spanish food system has maintained its Mediterranean character despite the fact that in the last decade of the twentieth century, the consumption of pulses, but especially that of bread and potatoes, has decreased remarkably. Meat and dairy consumption, in contrast, has increased and, to a certain extent, these foods have contributed to homogenizing the Spanish contemporary food system with that of the rest of the Western European countries. In terms of consumption, Spain is halfway between France and Italy: on one hand, Spaniards consume less wheat flour than Italians, the figures in this respect being similar to French ones. On the other hand, the consumption figures relative to olive oil and vegetable fats are more similar to those of Italians, and greater than those of the French.

Fresh and dried fruits, vegetables, and wine are also consumed in large quantities. More specifically, the consumption of vegetables, except potatoes, and of fresh fruit and eggs has notably increased since the 1970s. Fish consumption, despite a slight, variable fall, is rising again. In the last years, wine consumption, except for that of better quality, has fallen slightly, especially among younger generations, whereas there has been an increase in the consumption of other alcoholic drinks, such as beer.

NOTE

1. The other autonomous regions are Andalucia, Aragon, Asturias, Baleares Islands, Canary Islands, Cantabria, Castilla León, Castilla La Mancha, Extremadura, La Rioja, Madrid, Murcia, Navarra, Valencia, and the two autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla.

2

Major Foods and Ingredients

Spain imports and exports various food products. Certain foods reflect the agriculture, consumption, and food lore of diverse Spanish regions and cuisines. The following entries provide a brief, and inevitably incomplete, panorama of such foods. Whenever possible, their origin, preparation, importance, social function, and other details have been provided.

GRAINS AND BREAD

In the south of Spain the cultivation of grains possibly dates back earlier than 4000 B.C. Grains, especially wheat, have been a staple in Spain and the Mediterranean, as well as in most parts of Europe. Wheat was and still is the most important grain, followed by other minor grains such as oats, barley, and rye.

Pasta

Pasta consumption in Spain is approximately 11.25 lbs./person/year. In Spain, the conception of "pasta" is dried pasta and not really fresh pasta (a dough made with flour, water, and egg, prepared for immediate consumption and mainly homemade). It was not until the nineteenth century—and particularly during the twentieth century—that pasta became part of the Spanish gastronomy in a regular way, once again due to the Mediterranean influence and the very important rapport between Catalonia and Italy. As mentioned, Catalan cuisine is, perhaps, the only Hispanic cui-

sine that has created its own tradition, changing and adapting Italian pasta preparations, creating recipes of cannelloni and pasta that are genuine local innovations (cannelloni recipes, for example, are very important in Catalan cuisine, especially during the most important celebrations of the year, such as Christmas, for example).

Pasta also became a common food in other areas of eastern Spain. In Valencia, for example, *fideuá* (developed very recently, in the late twentieth century) is based on pasta (small noodles, in this case), but follows the procedure of *paella*. The use of noodles as a main element in soups and stews has become, in the last century, quite common throughout the country.

Rice

Rice consumption in Spain is relatively high: 15 pounds per person per year, and many dishes in Spanish gastronomy are based on rice. In Spain, rice crops extended from the eastern areas to the rest of the peninsula. Growing in still water, but not very far from the coast, Spanish rice—like that commonly used for *paella*—grows in enormous fields that stretch out for miles. Certain strains of this short-grained rice grow in Spain, and they have a unique capacity to absorb broth while remaining firm. The Valencia region produces a large part of the rice cultivated in Spain, and it is one of the only rice-growing regions in Europe to have a designation of origin (D.O.), but other areas are also important (and also with a protected D.O.): the Ebro Delta, in Catalonia, or the area around the city of Calasparra, in the region of Murcia, are two good examples. The Valencian way of cooking rice has spread to the whole country, to the extent that a local dish such as *paella* has come to be considered the Spanish "national" dish.

Wheat and Bread

Wheat became one of the three elements making up the famous "Mediterranean trilogy" (along with wine and olive oil). Historically and up to today, wheat has been an essential and protected crop and is produced both for domestic consumption and export.

Bread is made from various kinds of grains, although, at least in southern Europe, wheat flour is the major ingredient. Traditionally, bread has been the population's principal food; indeed, it was a staple for Christians, especially for Catholics, who were predominant in Spain. To them, symbolically speaking, bread, together with wine, represents the body of Jesus,



Different kinds of bread.

therefore its importance goes beyond mere food facts; in other words, bread has become a product with an outstanding ideological content.

Bread has always been a staple in the European food system. Etymologically speaking, most European food is only that which "goes with bread," the latter being the essential element of every meal.[1] Historically, the most popular bread has always been white bread, although among the lower social classes bread has been made from different kinds of flours: from combinations from different available grains (rye, buckwheat, oats) to those made from various foods such as acorns and beans.

Bread consumption in Spain is approximately 145 pounds per person per year. Bread is typically bought in the *panaderías* (bread stores). In Spain, there are many different and popular forms of bread: round (with a Catalan name: *pan de payés*, from Catalan *Pa de pagès*, or bread of peasant), the very typical long loaf (with different sizes—normally, in urban contexts, 1/4 kg or 1/2 kg—and different names in the different parts of Spain), rustic loaves, and so forth. There are also many local forms and specialties, some mixing different ingredients: olive oil, herbs, spices, cheeses, and sausages (e.g., Majorcan *sobrasada*). Other popular breads include the French baguettes—very similar to traditional loaves—or Italian *ciabatta*.

Bread is also an important ingredient in traditional Spanish cuisines. Many dishes, such as *gazpacho*, many soups and salads, and especially *migas*, a popular dish whose main ingredient is breadcrumbs, are eaten in various Spanish regions.

In restaurants, no bread and butter plate is normally provided. Bread is set directly on the table. Sometimes bread is also served or used as a popular kind of appetizer, with olive oil and salt.

PULSES

Beans

Although there were already some species of beans in Europe, from the sixteenth century onward, after the contact with the Americas, various new species were imported through Spain. The use of these pulses, from the so-called green and tender beans to dried beans, easily spread throughout the whole territory. Nowadays, some of the most popular regional Spanish recipes use different kinds of beans as the main ingredient: in Asturian *fabada* (a typical dish made with white beans), Catalan *mongetes* with *butifarra* (dried beans with local sausage), beans Rioja style (also known as *pochas*, with *chorizo*), and various hot or cold *empedrados* (literally "stoned").

Symbolically associated with the dead, fava beans were mostly eaten by the lowest classes. They are difficult to digest and cause flatulence. During times of scarcity, they replaced wheat in the making of flour. Favas are included in several popular Spanish recipes ("favas Catalan style" is a particularly renowned one).

Chickpeas

Chickpeas have been cultivated since ancient times. They were characteristic of the diet of humble people and their use became widespread in the various Spanish cuisines. They are the basic ingredient of diverse soups and stews and are eaten dried or boiled, sometimes in the form of purée, as a main dish or as a side dish. Chickpeas are one of the main ingredients of the popular stews in almost all Spain.

Lentils

Lentils are among the most ancient cultivated plants and a rich source of protein and iron. Lentils are the base of several Spanish dishes (such as

lentejas con chorizo—lentils with *chorizo*) or are used as stuffing. There are lentil salads and tasty lentils with cream. Their consumption, together with that of other pulses, is widespread.

Peas

The cultivation of this Mediterranean plant is very ancient and, throughout history, peas have been eaten by both the rich and poor. In Spain few local strains remain. Instead, mainly European or American strains are cultivated.

VEGETABLES

Artichokes

Artichokes have an Arabic name in Spanish: *alcachofas*. They belong to the family of thistle, and are considered as a healthful food. Artichokes are common in Spanish gastronomies, and they are eaten boiled, baked, in salads, fried in batter, or in a vinegar or oil marinade.

Asparagus

Asparagus was held in high esteem in Al-Andalus. Today, asparagus is commonly used in Spain and has managed to find its place in many Spanish cuisines. Those cultivated in the north of the peninsula (especially in Navarra) are particularly famous. Although asparagus appears in some areas in March, it is best when picked in April or May. A proverb states: *"Espárragos de abril, para mi, los de mayo, para mi amo, y los de junio para ninguno" (o "para mi burro")* ("April asparaguses for me, May asparaguses for my master, and June asparaguses for no-one" or "for my donkey"). Asparagus (green or wild asparagus) is eaten both fresh and cooked, especially in omelettes, and boiled asparagus preserves are common all over Spain.

Carrots and Turnips

The Arabs imported carrots into the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages. Little by little, they were introduced into the various cuisines and spread from the Mediterranean area to the Atlantic and northern peninsular regions. Carrots are common ingredients in *cocidos* (stews), soups, creams, and in salads. Turnips are not as widely used as carrots.

Cucumbers

Cucumbers originated in Asia and from there they were introduced into the Mediterranean area. Their freshness made them a common food during hot summers. Cucumbers are related to melons (which, later on, acquired the status of fruit) and they are eaten both fresh, in salads, and as ingredients of traditional peninsular dishes, such as the popular *gazpacho andaluz*.

Eggplants

Eggplants were introduced by the Arabs both into Spain and the south of Italy. In Spain, eggplants were not popular because physicians considered them quite unhealthy. There are, however, a wide variety of eggplant dishes (hot or cold, grilled, fried, in salads) in all Spanish cuisines, which still retain (or are variants of) the culinary tradition of the Al-Andalus origin.

Lettuce and Endive

Lettuce and endive are herbaceous plants grown on irrigated land and are mainly eaten raw, especially in salads. They are considered a fresh and light food and are believed to have sedative properties. They are an essential element of a number of salads and side dishes in Spain. Although the United States is the biggest producer of lettuce, in Europe the main producers and consumers are Spain, Italy, and France.

Mushrooms

Although they are neither vegetables nor herbs, mushrooms are very common in Spanish cuisines. Most of them appear at the end of summer, but their quantity and variety increase at the onset of autumn, a wet, but not yet cold, period. All the peninsular territory boasts a wide variety of mushrooms, some of which (such as the *amanita muscaria*) are highly toxic. Mushrooms are collected directly from their wild habitat and are the ingredients of numerous stews, but they are also eaten alone, especially braised, during popular festivals. Among the most renowned mushrooms are champignons, boletus, delicious lactarius, and French mushrooms. Some varieties are also used for curdling cheese and making other dairy products, such as *cuajada* (milk curd), a typical dessert of the north of the Peninsula.



Baskets with different kinds of mushrooms.

Onions and Garlic

Onions and garlic are very popular all over Spain. They were usually associated with the poorest classes, and since ancient times, they have been renowned for their therapeutic qualities and considered to have several medical applications (as a kind of "natural antibiotic"). As for their culinary applications, they are many and widespread: onions are eaten raw, in salads, candied, in vinegar or oil, in soups, fried, boiled, baked, and so forth.

Garlic, like onion, is thought to have many therapeutic properties. As a food it is used in many Spanish dishes and sauces, from the very well known *allioli* or *ajoaceite* ("garlic oil") to the most diverse stews, fried dishes, and soups. Fried in oil, garlic confers to many dishes a very special flavor and aroma appreciated by almost all of Spain.

Fried Eggs with Garlic

A very easy and tasty popular recipe.

Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup olive oil

- 3 garlic cloves
- salt to taste

Preparation
Heat the olive oil in a large skillet. Add the garlic cloves and cook until brown (but never black or "burned") and remove. Fry the eggs as usual, and serve with the fried garlic cloves.

Peppers

Peppers came from the Americas and were introduced into Europe through Spain in the sixteenth century. There are some typical varieties of peppers in Spain (such as the *pimientos de Padrón* in Galicia, or the *Pimientos del Piquillo de Lodosa* in Navarre, for example) and they are commonly eaten either raw, in salads, fried, roasted, in stews, or stir-fried. The current varieties in Spain are the result of the adaptation and evolution of this plant to the Mediterranean and European regions. Thus, although they are related to chili peppers, they are seldom hot.

Potatoes

Potatoes are tubers of Peruvian origin. Baked, fried, pureed, as an accompaniment to other foods, or as a main dish, potatoes are an essential and widely eaten foodstuff in Spain. Many popular dishes, such as tasty fried potatoes and fried eggs (fried always in olive oil), or boiled potatoes and other vegetables, and potato stews, are eaten frequently in Spanish homes (both at lunch and dinner time).

Pumpkins and Zucchini

Pumpkins and zucchini are native to the New World, but similar species of gourds had been cultivated in Spain since ancient times. They have been used for human consumption, livestock feed, and ornamentation. Pumpkin and zucchini can be boiled, stewed, made into soup, or more recently, prepared as creams. One of the most appreciated uses is in a cake called *cabello de angel* ("angel's hair"), which is made from candied pumpkin pulp, an important ingredient in sweets and desserts such as *Ensaïmada* (a soft sweet bread), from Mallorca.

Spinach

The Spanish word *espinacas* stems from the Arabic *ispinah;* the Arabs, in fact, imported this plant from Persia. This vegetable, which became fa-

miliar through its consumption during Lent, when people abstained from eating meat, is considered a healthful and inexpensive food. Many recipes with spinach are renowned in Spanish cuisines, such as "spinach Catalan way" (with pine nuts and dried raisins), with béchamel sauce, stuffed, and so forth.

Tomatoes

Some European cuisines, such as the Spanish and the Italian ones, could not be understood without considering the influence of tomatoes. However, whereas certain foodstuffs, such as peppers, were easily accepted and soon became popular, only well into the eighteenth century were tomatoes definitively introduced into the culinary methods and habits of Spain, and of Europe in general. Tomatoes are the ingredients of diverse dishes and stews all over the Spanish territory: from *gazpacho*, whose essential ingredient is tomato, to the Catalan *pa amb tomàquet* (bread with tomato) and the numberless tomato-based sauces, stews, soups, salads, and garnishes.

Gazpacho Andaluz

Ingredients

- 2 lb. tomatoes
- 1 green pepper
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 cucumber
- 1/2 onion
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- salt to taste

Preparation

Wash, peel, and finely chop the tomatoes. Wash the pepper, remove core and seeds, and chop it. Peel and chop the onion and the garlic cloves. Mix all the vegetables in a bowl and add the breadcrumbs, previously soaked in 1 teaspoon water. Dress with oil, vinegar, and salt to taste. Process the ingredients in a blender and sieve the resulting purée. Serve chilled.

Observations

The quantity and the ingredients may vary according to taste. If a more liquidy *gazpacho* is preferred, cold water may be added while blending the ingredients.

Garnish with finely chopped vegetables (pepper, onion, tomato, cucumber, etc.).

***Pà amb Tomàquet* (Bread with Tomato, from Catalonia)**

Ingredients

- 4 slices of bread (1 per person, from one large, round loaf of bread, Spanish or European-style crusty bread such as baguette or *ciabatta*)
- 2–3 tomatoes
- 1–2 garlic cloves
- olive oil
- salt to taste

Preparation

Grill or toast bread slices. Rub grilled bread with garlic halves, then rub tomato halves into bread—really mash them on there—the goal is to soak the bread slices with this tomato juice. Discard tomatoes, and drizzle bread with good olive oil to taste, then sprinkle with some salt. Later, you can top with your favorite complements: ham, cheese, *chorizo*, and so forth.

HERBS

Anise

Anise is a popular aromatic herb and is widely used to flavor cakes and herbal teas. It is considered digestive and is the main ingredient and name of a traditional Spanish liquor.

Aromatic Herbs (Thyme, Rosemary, Oregano, Basil, Chamomile, Mint, Peppermint)

A wide variety of aromatic herbs are commonly used for cooking. The most popular ones are oregano, thyme, rosemary, basil, dill (especially suitable for fish dishes), chamomile, and mint, but other herbs such as marjoram, chervil, sage, and fennel are also used. These herbs have added flavoring and seasoning to stews, salads, and other dishes along the centuries, and they have been used for making sauces, teas (which were generally considered therapeutic, digestive, and disinfectant), as well as liquors.

Cumin

This herb grows profusely in the Spanish mountains. It is used for its pharmaceutical properties and as a flavoring in numerous stews. Due to its

abundant spontaneous growth, cumin used to be considered of scarce economic value—this herb appears in some popular Spanish expressions to convey the idea of something that has very low value.[2]

Parsley

Parsley is one of the most commonly used herbs in all Spanish cuisines. It is employed as an essential garnish and as an element of various sauces (e.g., "green sauce") to go with meat and fish (according to a popular saying, parsley "can be found in all sauces"). Parsley is usually obtained for free from butchers, greengrocers, and fishmongers.

SPICES AND SEASONINGS

Cinnamon

Cinnamon was popular in ancient times as an aphrodisiac. It is commonly used in Spanish gastronomy, mainly for the flavoring of desserts such as the popular *arroz con leche* ("rice with milk"), *leche frita* (fried milk), *leche merengada* (milk with cinnamon and sugar), and ice cream. It is also used for flavoring some stews. Cinnamon's intense aroma and unique flavor are particularly appreciated.

Cloves

Cloves are currently used as intense flavoring for various aromatic dishes and stews. Its scent and flavor are hard, penetrating, and sweet. Therapeutic virtues are attributed to cloves, particularly for toothaches.

Honey

Records show that honey was used in Spain since the Neolithic period in order to preserve fruits and other foods. Subsequently, it started to be used for sweetening the first curd preparations. In ancient times, honey was considered the sweetener par excellence and it was so until sugar became predominant. The use of honey in the flavoring of cakes and as a sweetening agent is still widespread, although it is not as common as sugar. Honey is commonly used in many popular desserts, such as *bienmesabe* (made with honey and ground almonds) and the typical Christmas

dessert: *turrón*. The production of honey is also important in many Spanish regions, such as Extremadura, Andalusia, and Catalonia, and should be natural and aromatic (from herbs such as thyme or rosemary, or from flowers).

Mustard

Mustard sauce is used in Spain mainly as a dressing for red meats and, lately, for fast food or frankfurters (sausages). It wasn't really popular in Spain before the second half of the twentieth century.

Pepper

Pepper is one of the most highly valued spices in the world and was considered to have medicinal properties. Whereas most European languages have inherited the name of this spice from the Greek *peperi* and the Latin *piper*, the Spanish term stems from the Latin *pigmentum*, which also gave origin to the word *pimiento*, which refers to the vegetable (green or red peppers).

Pimentón (Paprika)

Also from the Latin *pigmentum* stems *pimentón*, the local Spanish specialties of red paprika, sweet or hot (very different also from other products such as the traditional Hungarian bland paprika), are highly valued spices in many Spanish cuisines. *Pimentón de la Vera* (designation of origin), from the Valle de la Vera (Vera Valley) in Cáceres (Extremadura), is particularly renowned.

The capsicum peppers used to produce the sweet *pimentón* are carefully hand-harvested in September to October and sent to warehouses where they are slow-smoked for 15 days. The whole peppers become drenched with the smoke of smoldering oak logs, adding intense flavor while preserving their natural blood-red color. For the hot smoked paprika, several peppers are milled together to make a decidedly piquant—not hot, but tangy—aroma and flavor.

Pimentón is an ingredient in many typical products, preparations, and dishes in all the Spanish cuisines, from the typical *chorizo* or the renowned *sobrasada* from the Balearic Islands, to other important dishes from the south, or from Castile (such as *callos* or tripe), or from the north (such as the Basque *marmitako*—see recipe in this chapter).

Saffron

Saffron is one of the most used natural colorings and the most expensive one, too. The Arabs systematized its cultivation in Spain, which is currently the world's leading producer and exporter. The process whereby this spice is obtained (the stigmas are removed from the blossoms and dried) is carefully and entirely done by hand. Its high price is, in fact, a direct consequence of this labor-intensive process, usually carried out by women in the countryside. Traditionally, saffron has been chiefly used as natural coloring (in dishes such as *paella,* for example), although it has also been considered to have healing properties.

Salt

Throughout history, salt has been a crucial element for food preservation and a qualitative improvement in the food system. In Spain there are various salt mines, especially along the Mediterranean coast: The most popular ones are those of Torrevieja (Alicante), Cardona (Barcelona), Torrelavega (Cantabria), Puerto de Santa María (Cadiz), and also in the Balearic Islands, Navarre, Murcia, and Oriental Andalusia. Fish, which had been a product for immediate consumption, became a trade item and it became possible to preserve it for long periods. In Spain, the best example of this kind of product is the "omnipresent" codfish, traditionally preserved in salt. Other important traditional foods that have been preserved are, among fish, anchovies, *mojama* (tuna dried and salted), and herring; among pork the best example is ham, dried in a windy room after being salted.

Sugar

The cultivation of the sugar cane, which was imported from Asia at first, was introduced by the Castilians and the Portuguese into their Atlantic islands (the Canary Islands and Madeira), and later on into the Caribbean and Brazil. It subsequently replaced honey as a sweetener for cakes, chocolate, coffee, and teas. Sugar is mainly available white (refined: as granulated, superfine, and powdered sugar) and brown (unrefined). Granulated white sugar is commonly used for baking, preserving, and table use (brown sugar is also offered on the table as an alternative to white sugar). Superfine sugar is used especially in baking, and powdered sugar is used for frostings and decorating desserts. Artificial saccharine or sweeteners and sugar substitutes are also available and

are becoming more common in homes and particularly in bars and restaurants.

Vanilla

Vanilla, which is native to Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean area, started to be extensively cultivated and used from the nineteenth century onward. Vanilla is now popular and profusely used (ice creams, cakes, etc.). Many products are actually industrially flavored with artificial vanilla aroma, rather than natural vanilla.

Vinegar

Vinegar, which is sour, fermented wine, is mainly used as a dressing in Spain for salads, pickles, and sauces, and as an ingredient for the maceration of diverse foods (vegetables, olives, fish, etc.). Spain is one of the largest wine producers and consequently, the production of vinegar is also very important. Wine vinegars from Jerez are particularly aromatic and internationally renowned. Cider vinegar is made in the north of Spain.

FRUITS

Apples

Apple crops were improved thanks to Greco-Roman agriculture. Apples are mainly cultivated in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, in the area stretching from Catalonia to Asturias and Galicia. They are commonly eaten as a dessert (fresh or cooked), or used as an ingredient for certain desserts and cakes. Cider, a popular drink of low alcoholic content, is made from the juice of the apple. Grated apples are popularly believed to be a good remedy against constipation.

Capers

Capers were very widespread in the south of Europe and have been used the same way as olives. They are usually eaten as an appetizer, macerated in vinegar, and in salads. Occasionally, they can be also found in some stews and sauces.

Carob Pods

Throughout history, carobs have been widely used as a food in the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean area in general. These fruits have been (and still are) a popular, inexpensive chocolate surrogate.

Cherries

The Romans improved cherry cultivation—also in Spain—although these fruits grew wild in most parts of Europe. Cherries are very popular, and are known to be diuretic and depurative, especially the Mediterranean varieties. The Valle del Jerte (Extremadura) is the largest area in Europe (more than 50 square miles) devoted to the cultivation of cherries (particularly the "picota" variety, very red and sweet). The cherry picking begins in April, and the fruit is ready to eat from the middle of May onward. June is the peak month for flavor, and the harvest continues into early August.

Chirimoyas

The fruits of the chirimoya tree come from Central America. These berries have a green rind and a white pulp, sweet taste, and a slightly rough texture. Chirimoyas are cultivated in warm countries and their cultivation in Spain, especially in the south, has been particularly successful.

Citrus Fruits

Oranges were bitter in ancient times; the sweet fruit that is known nowadays is the result of a later evolution of orange crops (which took place from the sixteenth century onward). The Mediterranean area, and Spain in particular, is now one of the largest European producers. Oranges are widely eaten for dessert and their freshly squeezed juice is very popular. The orange flavor has turned into the base of numberless variations: soft drinks, ice creams, candies, syrups, and so forth. Oranges have also been profusely used in some dishes (such as salads: Andalusian style, for example) and as a garnish. Orange trees, as well as lemon trees, also turned into ornamental plants and they still are, in many streets and squares or in private and public gardens, especially in the Mediterranean area and the south of the peninsula.

Lemons have also been cultivated in the Mediterranean regions. Lemons are considered healthy and their juice has been traditionally used as a dressing for diverse foods—such as seafood and fish, for example—or salads. Lemon juice mixed with water is a traditional refreshing drink. Grapefruit has not prospered much in Spain until recent times and is less important than oranges and lemons.

Dates

Dates are the very sweet fruits of the date palm. Normally eaten dried, they are a sweet dessert but are also eaten as an appetizer or, like plums, are used as a garnish for certain meat stews.

Figs

Mediterranean peoples have eaten the fruit of these trees throughout history. In Spain, fig trees are common in all the Mediterranean areas, from Catalonia and the Balearic Islands to Andalusia. Figs are eaten both fresh as a dessert and dried as a garnish for certain meat stews, cakes, and sweet desserts; and also macerated in liquor. Fig trees are normally cultivated for fig production, but also, lately, as a decorative tree in private and public gardens, public squares, and so forth.

Grapes and Raisins

Together with wheat and olive trees, grapes belong in the famous Mediterranean trilogy. Grapes, apart from providing the juice from which wine is made, are also eaten as table fruit, although in the past they were scarce in areas where they were not produced, such as those European regions that were further north. Grapes are produced almost all over Spain, where almost every region has a wine with designation of origin. They are eaten as dessert and may occasionally be found in some stews, especially meat- and poultry-based ones. Dried grapes, known as raisins, are also very popular and have a sweet and intense taste. Must, which is pressed grape juice not yet fermented into wine, is drunk fresh. From the end of the nineteenth century, but especially in the twentieth century, it became a traditional custom to celebrate New Year's Eve eating grapes at the stroke of midnight, one for each chime. It is said that this celebrating will bring luck during the incoming year. This tradition is still popular nowadays and is followed all over the country.

There are many different varieties of grapes, and every wine is made with a special grape or, normally, with a special combination of different grapes. We can find, for example, among white grapes: Airén (La Mancha), Malvasía (north), Palomino (Andalusia), Pedro Ximénez (Andalusia), Parellada (Catalonia), Viura or Macabeo (Rioja and Mediterranean area), Xarel·lo (Catalonia), and Moscatel (Andalusia and Mediterranean area). Among black grapes are: Cariñena (Aragon and north), Garnacha (Aragón and north), Graciano (Rioja), Monastrell (Mediterranean area), and Tempranillo (north).

Melons

Melons are related to cucumbers, but the current sweet variety of melons are more recent and have come to be considered a fruit rather than a vegetable, and they have acquired a large size through specialized cultivation. Melons and watermelons are very popular, and they are commonly eaten as a dessert. Melons, except for watermelons, are thought to be best eaten during the day.

Membrillos (Quinces)

Membrillos were very popular in Roman Hispania and, later on, in Al-Andalus. The Al-Andalus king of the Mediterranean island of Menorca (Balearic Islands), Saïd Ibn Hakam, even dedicated a poem to quinces:

> Five maids, dressed in yellow,
> Their color does not change if they undress.
> Their skin is hard and smooth, like virgins are.
> They are prisoners in my hands.
> Eager to touch the moon,
> They go out in their grey cloaks at night,
> But as they watch the moonlight shining,
> Their skin turns into gold... like virgins are.[3]

Candied quinces are popularly used to make the famous *dulce de membrillo* (“quince jelly”), a well-known dessert that can be eaten plain, with fresh or soft cheese, and with other sweets and fruits.

Olives and Olive Oil

Together with wine and wheat, the olive tree belongs in the famous Mediterranean trilogy. Olives are the tasty fruit of olive trees. They are small, though their size varies depending on the species, and they are usually eaten after being treated in solutions of water, salt, and other ingredients (such as aromatic herbs, spices, vinegars, etc.) that help reduce their bitter taste. Olives are usually various shades of green, black, or brown. Their consumption has extended from the Mediterranean (chiefly from Spain, Italy, and Greece) to the rest of Europe. They are popular as an appetizer and a garnish and can be commonly found in salads and some stews. In Spain, more than 250 varieties of olives are grown; for example: *Hojiblanca*, *Picudo*, *Picual*, *Verdial*, and *Lechín* from Andalusia; *Empeltre* (black) from Aragon; *Cornicabra* from La Mancha; *Manzanilla* and *Verdial* (Extremadura); and the very small and tasty *Arbequina* are from Catalonia.

Olive oil, which is so famous and commonly used nowadays, is extracted from olives. In the Golden Age in Spain (the fifteenth to the seventeenth century) it was associated with the Arabs and the Jews, while Christians used animal fat (especially lard) for cooking. However, over the centuries olive oil became the predominant edible fat and spread toward the inland and northern regions of the peninsula. Olive oil can also be said to mark the difference between the Mediterranean—Catholic or Orthodox—territories, where the olive oil is predominant, and the Protestant north, where the use of animal fat and butter becomes predominant. There are many different olive oils, depending on the different varieties of olives and different processes used. Spain is (with other European countries such as Italy, Greece, and France, but also other Mediterranean countries such as Tunisia) one of the most important producers of olive oil in the world.

Today raw olive oil is a special dressing for salads and other foods, as well as an important preserving ingredient for diverse foodstuffs, such as fish, vegetables, and even meats. In the past decades, cardio-healthy and dietetic properties have been attributed to olive oil, which has turned into one of the pillars of the food regimen known and promoted as the "Mediterranean diet."

Peaches and Apricots

Peaches and apricots were both introduced into Hispania by the Romans. Peaches are a popular food and they are used in the elaboration of

well-known desserts, such as peaches in wine or in syrup. The Spanish name *albaricoque* is of Arabic origin. Both fruits, especially peaches, are commonly used in the making of jam.

Pears

The Romans also introduced pear cultivation into the Iberian Peninsula. The traditional indigenous varieties are eaten all over Spain and can be found on the Spanish market almost all year long, from the small and savory pears of San Juan to the fleshy, sweet, and grainy textured *Roman pears* (Rome pears), which were traditionally stored all through the winter. Pears are mainly eaten fresh as a dessert or in salads, although they are also used in some stews, mostly meat stews.

Pineapples

Tropical pineapples are native to the New World, where they were called *ananás*. Their cultivation requires very specific climatic conditions, similar to those of tropical latitudes (such as in the Canary Islands). The names of these fruits in some European languages, such as *piña* in Spanish or “pineapple” in English, show an attempt to assimilate this strange new fruit to some familiar food, in this case the cone produced by pine trees. Other languages, such as French, adopted the original name, *ananás*. Pineapple consumption has spread over the last century, and this fruit is now eaten both fresh and preserved in syrup.

Plums

In Roman times, plums were called *cereola*, which later gave the Castillian name: *ciruela*. The laxative properties of plums are well known. They are eaten fresh, dried, and also macerated in liquor. Occasionally, prunes (dried plums) are used as a garnish for certain meat stews, particularly in Catalonia.

Pomegranates

Pomegranates are produced from the pomegranate tree. They are round, some varieties are sweet and others bittersweet, and their red pulp contains many seeds. In Spain, pomegranate crops can be found in the Mediterranean area in general. The sweeter varieties are eaten fresh, ei-

ther plain or as ingredients of certain popular recipes (with wine, sugar, and cinnamon, for example). From the most bittersweet and bitter varieties a refreshing syrup is made, which is known as grenadine. It is mixed with water or other drinks.

Prickly Pears

The spiny fruit produced from the nopal or prickly pear cactus are called prickly pears. They originated in America, and when they started to be cultivated in southern Spain, their growth became nearly spontaneous, and they spread across the Mediterranean area as well. Prickly pears are sometimes also called *barbary figs* (referred to *Berbería,* the land of the Berbers, in North Africa) or *Indian figs*.

Strawberries

Small-size varieties of wild strawberries were eaten in Europe in the past, but they became popular when larger-size American varieties started to be imported. Producers and researchers have now come up with a new top-tier variety of Spanish strawberry called "Aguedilla," which has been accorded a higher quality rating in studies than other foreign varieties.

Strawberries are very common ingredients of preserves and jam, and nowadays they are usually eaten as dessert and used in various cakes and sweets. There are important strawberry fields in western Andalusia (at Palos de la Frontera or Lepe, in the province of Huelva) as well as on the Mediterranean Catalan coast (at Calella in the county of Maresme, in Barcelona).

NUTS

Acorns

Acorns are the fruits of the oak tree, also called *árbol bellotero* (acorn tree), and have traditionally been used as cattle feed. They are particularly utilized as a natural food for hogs, which once grew wild in the surroundings of farms. The famous *jamón de bellota* (acorn ham) is actually made from the meat of pigs that feed on this nut. The use of acorns as human food, in the form of flour, was also common in the past.

Almonds

Almonds are among the most popular nuts and Spain is one of the largest almond producers, together with Italy, the United States, Portugal,

and Turkey. Production is mainly centered in the Mediterranean area and the Balearic Islands. The city of Reus, in Catalonia, is the most important world trade center of almonds. Almonds are eaten whole, toasted, or salted. Almonds are the basic ingredients of different sweets, such as *turrón* (a nougat of Hispanic-Arabic origin, usually eaten at Christmas) and almond milk, and also in stews and as a basic ingredient for sauces and preparations (such as the *picada,* made with almonds—or hazelnuts—crushed with other ingredients, such as bread, parsley, olive oil, garlic, or saffron). They are also eaten as an appetizer, toasted, and salted.

Chestnuts

Since ancient times, chestnuts have been an important food in the Spanish diet, especially in the north of the Peninsula. Before the arrival of food from the Americas, chestnuts played the role that is played by potatoes today; they were used for making flour and purées and as ingredients of various stews. Chestnuts are still used in many homes in regions such as Galicia—one of the large chestnut producers in Spain. Chestnuts are harvested in autumn (September–October). Traditionally, with the onset of winter, around All Saints Day (November 1), chestnut sellers make their appearance in all Spanish cities, offering brazed chestnuts and sweet potatoes. Chestnuts are used in many desserts and sweets, such as *pure de castañas* (chestnut purée) or *marron glacé* (crystallized chestnut), and are also preserved in syrup.

Hazelnuts

Hazelnut trees are largely cultivated in the Mediterranean area. Hazelnuts were already well liked by the Romans, and they are currently eaten toasted, as an appetizer or snack, as well as in various stews, especially also in the form of *picada* (crushed with other ingredients, such as olive oil, garlic, and parsley). In Spain the largest hazelnut production is centered in the Mediterranean area, especially in Catalonia. There, the city of Reus is, as in the case of almonds and nuts, the capital of hazelnut international trade.

Lupines

Lupines are soaked and commonly eaten in many Spanish regions as an appetizer or a snack, and they are usually eaten after being treated in solutions of water and salt.

Peanuts

Peanuts are native to South America and they were brought to Europe (to the Iberian Peninsula) by the Spaniards and the Portuguese. These nuts are eaten natural or salted, mainly as an appetizer. Among nuts, peanuts have a relatively low price, unlike almonds and hazelnuts.

Pine Nuts

Pine nuts are the seeds of the pine tree. They are small and savory and are eaten fresh or toasted. They are also the ingredient of some meat- and fish-based stews and dishes, sauces and desserts (e.g., the popular Catalan *coca de pinyons*—pine nut pastry). The price of pine nuts is usually higher than that of other nuts.

Pistachios

Pistachios were commonly used by the Arabs, who left their influence in the peninsular cuisines through this product. Their shells are reddish and they are green inside. Fresh pistachios have a very pleasant taste. They are also used in the flavoring of cakes, as a dressing, and as ingredients for anticough syrups. Like other nuts, dried pistachios are eaten as an appetizer or a snack and can be preserved for a long time.

Walnuts

Walnuts are produced from the walnut tree and are very popular either plain or as ingredients of various dishes, stews, sauces, and desserts. To the same family belong other species, such as the valued spice known as nutmeg.

DAIRY PRODUCTS

Milk, both fresh and in the form of dairy products, is a basic and a highly valued foodstuff. In Spain, four main milk-processing techniques can be distinguished:

Milk

- Liquid milk: it is cooled (raw milk); processed (pasteurized, sterilized, UHT); concentrated (elimination of water); fermented (yogurt and other preparations); jellied (thickened); and coagulated.

- Curdled milk: removal of casein; curdling; whey/water removal process; cheese.
- Fat removal: skim milk and butter.
- Utilization of milk by-products (whey, lactoserum): they are concentrated and dried, used as cattle feed.

In Spain, milk has been historically regarded as a complete food and it has been consumed whenever possible, especially by children. In any case, it is worth remembering that the populations that have developed higher tolerance to lactose are the northern ones, while the tolerance degree decreases as one moves toward southern Europe. Spain, one of the most mountainous states of Europe, is a large milk, cheese, and dairy producer, despite the fact that upon entering the European Union, where milk is an excess product, Spain was obliged to reduce milk production. Important milk producing areas in Spain are, in the north, Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, the Basque Country, Castilla-León, and Catalonia, and in the south, Andalusia.

Cheese

Cheese is a product made from curdled milk, which may subsequently be treated in various ways (drying, salting, smoking, ripening, etc.) and may be molded in many different shapes. In Spain, cheese is mainly made from goat, cow, and sheep milk.

Cheese was made by hand on country farms until the nineteenth century, when the first important industries were created. More than 120 different kinds of cheese are made all over Spain. Some of them are of very high quality, belong to the local or regional gastronomic heritage, and are very much appreciated and popular all over the national territory, even beyond Spanish borders.

In some areas of Spain, specific methods of cheese making, using specific kinds of milk, have come under protection (acquiring the so-called designation of origin). This system has enabled producers to *fix* the way of making cheese, preventing change in the production of that specific area. Every designation of origin is ruled by a board that sees to it that the product manufacturing norms are maintained unaltered. Among the most renowned Spanish cheeses are: *Manchego* (Castilla-La Mancha), *La Serena* (Extremadura), *Burgos* (Castilla y León), *Mahón* (Menorca and Balearic Islands), *Idiazábal* (Basque Country), *Roncal* (Navarra), *Tetilla*

gallega (Galicia), *Cabrales* (Asturias), *Tronchón* (Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia), and *Tupí* (Catalonia), to list a few.

Yogurt

Yogurt is a dairy product obtained from the fermentation of milk, which has been previously pasteurized and concentrated. Native to Asia, yogurt was introduced into Western Europe from Turkey and the Balkans. Today, it is industrially made from cow milk (although not exclusively) and, especially from the second half of the twentieth century on, it has become an element of the Spanish diet in its own right. Yogurt is largely regarded as a healthful food, to the extent that, during the first four decades of the twentieth century, it was sold in pharmacies as a highly nutritional dairy product.

MEAT AND SAUSAGE

Chickens and Hens

Today, chicken is an everyday food. It is raised industrially and sold at a very affordable price, although this has not always been so. Only 50 years ago, chicken was a scarce and appreciated meat that the lower classes reserved for special occasions. It was eaten by ill people because it was considered a healthful and light food, especially if it was boiled, and it was also eaten for festivities, even as a Christmas dish. There are countless chicken-based recipes. Noteworthy among them is chicken or hen fricassee (stewed with egg yolks and saffron), a dish that dates to the seventeenth century, as well as many other preparations, such as roasted, boiled, and fried chicken, chicken soup, chicken *chilindrón*, and *al ajillo*.

Ham

Ham, the salted and dried leg or shoulder of the pig, can be also considered a kind of pork sausage. *Jamón serrano* is very popular, and *jamones* are seen hanging in stores, bars, and often in private homes. In a farmhouse, there is very often a room, windy and dry, where the cool winds blow through, curing hams. Like a connoisseur of wine who sniffs the cork, and savors the bouquet, the whiff of ham on the splinter is how a fine *jamón serrano* (or *Ibérico*) is determined.

Other similar products exist in Europe (Parma ham from Italy, or Bayonne ham from France, for example), even the Smithfield country ham,



Dish (*ración*) of Serrano ham.

from the United States, but the different flavor sets the *jamón serrano* apart. It is cured like a country ham, yet it has 300 percent less salt and is never smoked.

But the king of Spanish hams is the internationally renowned *pata negra* ham. *Pata negra* is the famous Spanish "black hoofed" ham, produced from an ancient breed of Iberian hog. *Pata negra* ham came, normally, from animals that were only fed acorns *(bellotas)* to fatten them up before they were butchered. Acorns provide this *bellota* ham with a wonderful marbling and give them their fabled texture, smell, and taste. As an added bonus, the fat is unusually high in oleic acid, which is known to lower cholesterol levels. *Bellota* ham should be produced from Iberian pork or other Spanish breeds.

Horse and Foal

Although the meat of horses and of their young has been traditionally eaten in the Iberian Peninsula, it is not very popular nowadays. For many centuries, horses were, in fact, very useful for transportation and as cart-

animals. Horsemeat consumption was reintroduced into Europe in the nineteenth century. Despite the fact that it was not as popular as it is in other European countries, such as France and Italy, horsemeat has been eaten in Spain during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and today it is still possible to purchase it, although it is not commonly eaten. Horsemeat, which is slightly sweeter than beef, is appreciated for its nutritional qualities.

Oxen, Cows, Bulls, and Calves

The cow and the bull are, respectively, the female and the male of their bovine species; the ox is a castrated and tame bull; the calf is the young of the cow that still has milk teeth. While cows are mainly destined for milk production and breeding, and only secondarily for consumption, oxen are chiefly raised for their red meat, although in the past they were employed on the farms as cart animals and beasts of burden. Though less tasty than beef and ox meat, veal is preferred because it is more tender; its offal is also eaten (a well-known dish is made from veal tripe in almost all Spain: the so-called *callos:* chopped tripe stewed with a sauce and other ingredients). Together with ox, veal is the most eaten of the four meats listed here. The case of bull (wild or fighting bull) is different. Bulls are wild, grazing the pastures of the southern half of Spain (especially in Extremadura and Andalucia) and their meat used to be sold and eaten after the animal had died in the bullring. It has never been a popular meat, and its consumption has decreased through the years. Today it is still a rather uncommon food. Because bull meat is much tougher than ox meat, it is chiefly stewed ("bull's tail stew" is a dish that is still cooked nowadays, mainly in restaurants, because bull's tail is becoming increasingly difficult to purchase for home consumption).

Tripe Madrid Style

Ingredients

- 1/4 lb. diced veal tripe
- 1 lb. lamb leg, diced
- 1/2 lb. ham, diced
- 2 *chorizo* sausages, diced
- 2 *morcilla* sausages (blood sausage), diced
- 1 ham bone

- 1 onion
- 1 garlic head
- 1 tbs. flour
- 1 parsley bunch
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 chili peppers
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 tsp. sweet red *pimentón* (smoked paprika) powder
- 1 tsp. hot red paprika powder
- 1/3 cup oil
- 1 cup vinegar
- salt to taste

Preparation

Wash the tripe and lamb leg chunks thoroughly. Put them into a pot and cover in cold water and vinegar. Let them sit for 15–20 minutes and drain. Cover them with fresh water again and heat until the water boils. Remove the pot from the heat and change the water once more. Add the parsley, bay leaf, garlic, half onion (keep the other half for frying), chili peppers, ham, ham bone, and *chorizo* and *morcilla* sausages and cook on low heat for about two and half hours. Fry the remaining onion and stir in the flour and the hot paprika and sweet *pimentón*. Add the resulting sauce to the tripe stew, add salt to taste and let simmer on low heat for about another 15 minutes.

Partridges and Quail

Partridges are small game birds and their meat has been highly valued ever since Roman times. The most abundant species in the Iberian Peninsula is the red partridge. It was usually hunted with decoys, imitating the characteristic call. Partridge meat is usually left to sit for some time after the animal has been killed. According to a popular saying "partridges are to be eaten when they hit your nose," meaning that the meat (as is true of most game) must be eaten when it starts "going off" and smelling, a sign that it has become more tender.

Quail are also very popular. They are smaller than partridges and are usually seasoned with salt and pepper and baked. Their attractive spotted eggs are eaten as an appetizer or as ingredients in various *tapas*, hors d'oeuvres, and salads. They are also used (with their shells) as a garnish for some dishes.

Pork and Wild Boar

Through history, pork has been, perhaps, the most popular meat in Western Europe. In Spain, as the popular saying has it, "everything that comes from pig is used." Spanish breeds are very appreciated, chiefly the Iberian one. Lard was used for cooking in Spanish homes until the nineteenth century and even later, except during Lent, when it was replaced by olive oil. In Spain, nine main parts of pork meat can be distinguished: ham, sirloin, chine, ribs, shoulder, brisket, head, neck, and feet. Suckling pigs (called *lechón* or *cochinillo*) are also a popular dish, especially, although not exclusively, in Castilla, where the city of Segovia is particularly famous for its roast suckling pig, which is cooked only a few days after its birth.[4] Roast suckling pig (known under many different names in Spain, such as *tostón*, *cochifrito*, *rostrizo*) is the most widespread recipe, although there are many others that are also popular (stuffed and stewed piglet, piglet in sauce, etc.).

Wild boars are all over the peninsula. Boar meat has a stronger taste than pork and it is considered tastier, although it is also tougher and must be cooked after being previously macerated, as in the case of other large game, such as deer. A well-known sausage is made from the boar's head and other ingredients, which bears the same name ("boar's head").

Rabbit and Hare

Rabbit meat is very popular and is widely eaten all over Spain. Rabbit meat is best eaten during the winter, preferably when the animal is between three and nine months old. Rabbit meat is the base for various typical regional dishes and stews, such as braised rabbit with *allioli* (garlic sauce), rabbit hunter-style, rabbit *al ajillo* (with garlic), and so forth. Hares, which are also small game, but much larger in size than rabbits, are common in Iberian mountains. Unlike other meats, hare meat must be eaten fresh, soon after the animal has been killed, and the hare must be young, between three and six weeks old. However, the meat keeps its quality until the hare is more or less one year old, and, in the case of female hares, up to their second year of age.

Sausage

Pork has traditionally been an important food supply in Spain through the centuries, because it could be preserved all year long. Sausage consists of pork seasoned with spices, dried or fresh, which can be preserved for



Market stand with different *embutidos* (pork products and sausages: ham, *chorizos*, etc.).

much longer than fresh meat. The name *embutido* (sausage, literally "cased/stuffed") alludes to the traditional technique used for preserving meat. The animal's intestines are thoroughly washed and stuffed with the seasoned meat, following various recipes. There is a wide variety of sausage in the peninsula, each having specific ingredients and drying degrees: *butifarra* (raw or cooked, white or black), *morcilla* (made from blood and onion or rice), *salchichón* and *longaniza* (made from lean salted meat, dried and seasoned), the famous *chorizo* (with hot/sweet red *pimentón*), and *lomo embuchado* (cased chine, made from dried and seasoned chine).

Stag and Deer

Deer venison is among the most appreciated wild game meats and has always been abundant in the Iberian Peninsula. Traditionally, deer hunting during the Middle Ages and the modern age was the prerogative of the nobles. Deer meat is tough and difficult to digest, which is natural for an animal that lives wild in the mountains, and its taste, like that of

game in general, is stronger than that of livestock and farm animals. The favorite parts of deer are the hind legs, although the ribs and fore legs are also appreciated. Deer meat is usually roasted, but it is often left to sit in wine, vinegar, oil, or other ingredients (onion, bay leaf, herbs, berries, etc.) for five to seven days, for it to become more tender. Fallow and roe deer venison are usually more tender than stag venison. Deer meat is not eaten much nowadays, and the law currently protects some species. In any case, venison is quite common on the market, especially during the large game hunting season. Its price is higher than that of farm animals in general.

Turkey

Turkey originated in North America and reached the Old World (more specifically France, from where it spread to the rest of the countries) well into the modern age. The custom of having turkey for Christmas lunch or dinner dates to the eighteenth century and originated in France. In Spain, however, turkey did not become a Christmas Eve food until the nineteenth century, and even today, this practice is not very common.

FISH AND SEAFOOD

Fish has been always a prominent food in Spain. There were important salting factories in the south and the east in ancient times (during the Phoenician, Greek, Roman, and Arabic periods) and fish preserves (such as the Roman *garum* mentioned in the previous chapter) were renowned. Nowadays, Spain has one of the world's largest fishing fleets; undoubtedly the largest of the European Union, and it is one of the main fish consumers and importers in the world. However, fish consumption was limited in the past. Due to the fact that it could not be easily preserved and transported, fresh fish was only eaten in coastal areas or in regions that were close to the coast. In the past, fish was less valued than meat and was regarded as a food of little substance, frequently associated with Lent and ecclesiastical prohibitions and bans. Cod is a special case. This fish, despite the fact that it was not native to the waters of the peninsula, has been captured by Iberian fishermen in the northern European seas for ages (the Basque people gained fame as fishermen and whalers during the Middle Ages). This is due to the fact that cod was salted, which guaranteed its preservation for a long time.

Anchovies

Anchovies are blue fish. In Spain two different names are given to anchovies, depending on whether they are fresh or cured. *Boquerón* is eaten fresh or in vinegar marinade (according to the popular recipe: fresh anchovies are cleaned, cut into fillets, and macerated in a marinade of vinegar, water, garlic, or spices). *Anchoas* are anchovies that have been blended and salted. Fresh anchovy recipes are famous in areas that are very different, such as the Basque Country and Andalusia. Among the most renowned anchovies are those of L'Escala, on the Catalan Costa Brava.

Anglerfish

This is a white fish that is fished for all year long. It was a favorite of ancient Greek and Roman cooks. Subsequently, however, the anglerfish's popularity with the Spanish population dwindled and was not recovered until the second half of the twentieth century. Nowadays, anglerfish can be said to be one of the most popular species in the Spanish gastronomy, especially along the coast. Anglerfish dishes include the Balearic anglerfish stew, the Catalan "Anglerfish with potatoes and *allioli,*" anglerfish with potatoes and peppers from Eastern Andalucía, Galician *calderada,* Asturian anglerfish with cider, and the Basque anglerfish in green sauce.

Codfish *(Bacalao)*

Cod *(bacalao)* cannot be found in the waters close to the Spanish coasts. It lives in the cold North and Baltic Seas, Iceland, and Newfoundland, where it was fished in the past by Iberian fishermen. Basque whalers came across it while chasing whales in the North Sea, on their way to the coasts of Newfoundland.

Cod is preserved in salt and it was and still is largely eaten and prepared in countless ways in the peninsula, both in Spain and in Portugal. This fish was particularly popular during Lent, when people abstained from eating meat. Today, although religious practices are not as common any longer, codfish is still eaten in many ways by part of the population during Lent. The Spanish cod fishing fleet has gained importance again recently, and this fish is commonly eaten. There are famous cod-based recipes almost all over Spain (cod *ajo arriero,* with *allioli,* with raisins and pine nuts, with honey) but the ones from the Basque Country are perhaps the most renowned: codfish *pil pil* and codfish *vizcaína* style.



Different pieces of salt cod (*bacalao*).

Spanish codfish is never fresh but traditionally preserved in salt (for a long voyage from the North Atlantic to the Iberian Peninsula). This kind of preparation confers to Spanish (and also Portuguese) codfish a special flavor, but it is always necessary to desalt the codfish before cooking (except in a few popular preparations, such as salads), changing the water two, three, or even four times.

Codfish *Pil Pil*

Ingredients

- 2 lb. codfish
- 6 garlic cloves
- olive oil
- salt to taste

Preparation

Desalt the cod by soaking for 24 hours, changing the water frequently. Cook it on low heat. Put some oil and three garlic cloves into a separate earthen skillet. Fry

the remaining three garlic cloves in some oil in a frying pan and remove from heat. Place the cod chunks into the skillet and pour over some of the stock obtained by boiling the fish. Cook on low heat, gently shaking the skillet until the sauce thickens, to prevent sticking. Add the frying oil that was left in the pan little by little as the sauce becomes thick (about 15 minutes).

Eels and Elvers

Eels and elvers (baby eels) are bluefish. Their names stem from the Latin *anguilla* (whip), which alludes to their elongated shape. These fatty fishes were much appreciated by the ancient Greeks and Romans and were regarded as a choice morsel during the Middle Ages. Later on, eel consumption decreased and this fish became less common. Elvers are currently considered a delicacy and are highly valued, especially in the Basque gastronomy.

Hake

This white fish is fished all year long and is abundant along the coasts of Europe, northern Africa, and northeast Africa. This fish is highly valued by Spanish consumers, though in most areas (except for the Basque Country and the Cantabrian cornice), it has become popular only since the beginning of the twentieth century. The fact that hake can be easily preserved by freezing them at sea has favored the consumption of this fish at a price that is more affordable than that of fresh hake. Almost all its body is used: the tail fin and the central part (cut in slices or whole) are particularly appreciated. The *kokotxas* (Basque term that indicates the throat area of the fish) and the eggs are also popular. Even their head is used to add flavor to fish soups and stocks. The most famous hake recipes come from the Basque and Cantabrian areas (hake with cider, hake Basque style, *kokotxas*, etc.).

Herring

This bluefish cannot be found on the Mediterranean or the Atlantic Iberian coasts, but has been fished since ancient times, especially by the Basques, in the northern Atlantic latitudes. Pressed and salted herring have almost always been popular and affordable for the common people. During the nineteenth century and part of the twentieth century, herring were still a common food on the humblest tables.

Sea Bream

This white fish has a white and soft meat. It is renowned all over the peninsula, especially along the Cantabrian cornice. Roast bream was (and partly still is) a traditional dish in many inner regions (such as Castille and Aragon) on Christmas Eve.

Tuna

Tuna are migratory fish, common both in the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean seas, where they breed (red tuna breed along the Western Mediterranean coasts and white tuna in the bay of Cadiz, in Eastern Andalusia, Galicia, and the Atlantic area).

Tuna are still an important ingredient in the contemporary Spanish gastronomies. Many exquisite ancient dishes, in their essence, are continued in current Spanish cuisines. These include salted tuna steak, preserved in oil, and *mojama* (dried and salted tuna). Tuna has triggered the creation of many preserving industries: it is mainly preserved in olive oil. Spain is the main consumer and exporter of tuna.

Marmitako

This typical Basque dish gets its name from the receptacle in which it is prepared: the *marmita* (pot). This full-bodied stew, which is normally eaten during the summer months, is a highly coveted specialty and often requested in the finest restaurants.

Ingredients

- 2-1/2 lbs. fresh tuna
- 2 lbs. potatoes
- 1 lb. tomatoes
- 3–4 red peppers
- 6 green peppers
- 1 onion
- 8 garlic cloves
- 1 generous dash of olive oil
- 1 tbs. flour
- 1 tbs. smoked paprika
- 6 bread slices
- 1 hot chili pepper

Preparation
Bake the two kinds of peppers, peel them, and cut them vertically into strips. Fry them on a low heat together with a garlic clove. Peel and chop the remaining garlic and the onion, fry them in oil, always stirring, to prevent burning. When the mixture is golden brown, add the flour, the smoked paprika, and the tomatoes, seeded and chopped. Simmer for 20 minutes and add the fried peppers. Let cook for another five minutes.

Peel and dice the potatoes and boil them in a pot. Remove the skin from the tuna, cut it into chunks, and add these into the pot when the potatoes are nearly cooked. Five minutes later, add the fried vegetable preparation, the chili pepper, and the bread slices and let cook for another 20 minutes.

Whale

Whales are not fish, but marine mammals. Since prehistoric times, whale meat has been popular in all Atlantic Europe. Whales provided meat as well as oil, skin, and fat. Basque whalers, who plied the northern European seas since in the Middle Ages, are legendary. From the late Middle Ages on, whale meat was commonly eaten not only in the Atlantic regions of Spain, but also the inner Meseta, where it was eaten smoked. From the modern age onward, however, both whale consumption and fishing dramatically and progressively decreased, and today it is not possible to purchase whale meat. In 1986, Spain agreed to give up whaling before the International Whaling Commission.

DRINKS AND HERBAL TEAS

Absinthe

Absinthe was allegedly invented in Switzerland by Pierre Ordinaire in 1792 as an all-purpose remedy made with "Artemisia absintum," considered a drug in large quantities, and prepared as a commercial liquor by Henri L. Pernod in France. It was nicknamed in French *La Fée Verte* (The Green Fairy); a nickname that has stuck. Absinthe is a symbol of inspiration and daring, associated with the artistic life (as it was in France in the nineteenth century) and is sometimes used as an aphrodisiac. A ban on the drink was imposed in almost every European country and in the United States after World War I, except in Spain and Portugal, where absinthe has been always legal and produced following the traditional formula, even if it is not a popular liquor, as it was in France. Absinthe's

production is controlled and has long been considered a toxic substance that causes degenerative brain damage. It is always made in the French way: sugar is placed on a spoon and suspended over a tall glass filled with a shot of green absinthe. Then ice-cold water is dripped over the sugar and allowed to fall in beads into the drink. Absinthe is mainly produced in the Mediterranean area and the Balearic Islands.

Anise

Anise spirit (widely known as *anís*) is a highly alcoholic drink distilled from the aromatic herb that bears the same name. There are two main varieties of anise: dry and sweet. It has traditionally been consumed as a digestive drink, at the end of meals.

Beer

Curiously enough, the most ancient remains of beer in Western Europe have been found in the Iberian Peninsula: in Catalonia.[5] But beer would remain ignored in Spain for a long time. From the nineteenth century on, important beer breweries were created in Spain, and beer consumption started to increase. Beer really became established in the second half of the twentieth century and Spaniards are currently some of the largest beer drinkers in the Mediterranean area, although well behind central and northern Europeans. Spanish beers have a good reputation all over Europe.

Brandy

Brandy, a distilled form of wine, acquires a higher alcoholic content. Usually it is left to rest in wooden barrels. It is normally consumed at the end of meals or in bars and has turned into a typical accompaniment to coffee. In Spain, the main brandy-producing areas are Andalusia (Jerez) and Catalonia (Penedès). Unlike other similar spirits, such as French cognac, Spanish brandy has a characteristically dark color.

Cava

The term *cava* indicates quality sparkling wine fermented in the bottle after a traditional method (also known as "champenoise"; in other words *cava* is the Spanish equivalent of the French designation of origin "Champagne"). *Cava* has been made in Catalonia since the nineteenth century;

more specifically, it is made from the white wines of the Penedès area. The quality of Catalan *cava* is excellent and this wine is exported internationally. Some of the largest multinational sparkling wine companies are Catalan. *Cava* is also produced in other Spanish areas such as Aragon, Valencia, Extremadura, and La Rioja, but not in as large quantities and it is not as popular. This sparkling wine is a traditional drink on festive occasions. Nowadays, it is difficult to conceive of a celebration without *cava*, and its consumption is currently increasing, to the extent that *cava* has begun to replace wine during meals.

Chocolate

Cocoa is native to the Americas, from where the Spaniards brought it into the Iberian Peninsula at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It soon became popular, especially among the wealthy classes and the clergy. Chocolate spread swiftly as soon as sugar was added to its preparations. Chocolate became so popular in Spain that at the beginning of the eighteenth century there were already some factories that specialized in its production. When consumed as a hot drink, it was particularly appreciated thick. When, in the eighteenth century, King Philip V sold the, until then, secret formula of chocolate, it became widely popular in the rest of Europe, especially through Italy and France. This preparation became known as "chocolate Spanish style." However, chocolate consumption was not a mass phenomenon and it remained the prerogative of certain social elites. Despite the fact that the use of chocolate for cake making dates to as early as the modern age, chocolate bars, as they are eaten nowadays, were invented much later, in the nineteenth century. Aphrodisiac and invigorating properties have traditionally been attributed to chocolate and it is also considered to be a remedy against depressive symptoms.

Cider

Cider is made from apple juice and is low in alcohol. In Spain, cider is mainly produced in the Cantabrian area, the most renowned ciders being the Asturian and the Basque ones. A soft and tasty vinegar cider is also produced.

Coffee

In the nineteenth century, coffee replaced beer and wine as a morning drink, providing a higher degree of alertness during the day. It is a highly

social drink, popular in cafés both in Spain and in the rest of Europe, drunk after meals, and on social occasions and meetings. Coffee is consumed in various ways in Spain: it is drunk plain and black, aromatic, and with abundant milk. A popular way of drinking coffee in Spain is in the form of *cortado* ("cut"), a sort of espresso with a dash of milk, which softens its bitter taste.

Must

Must is the natural juice obtained from grapes (that is, it is not fermented or turned into wine). It is a very common drink, especially in the north of the Iberian Peninsula.

Orujo (Aquavit)

Orujo is a spirit distilled from the remains of the skin, seeds, and stems of grapes left after pressing. *Orujo* is traditionally homemade and has a high alcoholic content. The *Orujos* from Galicia are particularly renowned; they are either white (with no added ingredients) or flavored with herbs or honey.

Rum

This spirit is distilled from sugarcane, and its Spanish consumption and production are bound to Cuba, which remained under Spanish domination until 1898, and more specifically, to the Catalan emigrants who resided on the island. The product distilled from sugarcane was commonly consumed in Cuba, and it was a handmade, bitter, and strong drink. Some of the most important rum distilleries today were created during the Spanish rule, just like other distilleries of the peninsula, which made rum from Cuban sugarcane (the most ancient ones were also located in Catalonia). It is worth highlighting, in this respect, that rum was an important drink for the "Indians" (name for Spaniards who left Cuba and went back to Spain at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century). Rum is commonly drunk with coffee; some *quemados* (*cremats*, in Catalan, which literally means, "burnt ones")[6] made from this spirit even contain some toasted coffee beans.

Water

Spain, as a member of the European Union, is subjected to a common legislation with respect to water production and commercialization.

Spain, together with Italy and France, is an important producer and consumer of bottled mineral water. The main producing areas usually coincide with mountainous regions: Catalonia and Aragon, Andalusia, Galicia, and the Cantabrian area.

Wine

Spain is currently one of the main producers and consumers of red, white, and rosé wine in the world (as well as the aromatic wines from Andalusia). Today, Spain has (together with France and Italy) some of the most valued wine designations of origin in the world. Among them, the most internationally renowned are Rioja, Ribera del Duero, Penedès, and Priorat. As for aromatic wines, the most popular are those from Jerez (the famous *Sherry*), Manzanilla (from san Lúcar de Barrameda, Cadis) and also Montilla-Moriles (Cordova); whereas among sweet wines, the most distinctive ones are *Malaga* wine together with Muscat and *garnacha* wines. On the northern peninsular coast, fine white and fresh wines are produced: *Ribeiro*, the Galician *Rías Baixas*, and the Basque *Txacolín*. Other prominent designations of origin are those of Costers del Segre (Catalonia), Toro and Valladolid (Castilla y León), and the wines from Navarra, Somontano, Borja and Cariñena (Aragon), Jumilla (Murcia), aromatic wines from Montilla and Moriles (Andalusia), Castilla-La Mancha, and the white wines from Rueda (Castilla-La Mancha), Extremadura, Valencia, or the wines from Binissalem or Pla i Llevant (Mallorca and Balearic islands).

NOTES

1. The Spanish term *companaje*, which stems from the Latin *companatium* (that is, *cum panis* = with bread). The same word appears in various Romance languages.

2. The expressions referred to are, for example, *no me importa un comino* (literally "it bothers me less than a cumin seed" that is, "I couldn't care less"; and "no vale un comino" (it's not worth a cumin seed).

3. From Josep Piera, "El oriente de al-Ándalus, una cocina de frontera," in *La alimentación mediterránea: Historia, cultura, nutrición*, ed. F. Xavier Medina (Barcelona: Icaria, 1996).

4. According to the Roman author Pliny, piglets were ready to be consumed as early as four days after they had been born.

5. More specifically at the Iberian site of Cova Sant Sadurni (Barcelona), which dates from the Bronze Age, about 5000 B.C. (See: Edo, M., Banco, A., and Villalla, P. "Cova Sant Sadurni," in *International Congress on Beer in Prehistory and*

Antiquity. Barcelona, October 3–5th, 2004 (forthcoming). See also: Jordi Juan-Tresserras, "La cerveza prehistórica: Investigaciones arqueobotánicas y experimentales," in *Genó: Un poblado del Bronce final en el Bajo Segre*, ed. J.L. Maya, F. Cuesta, and J. López Cachero. (Barcelona: Publicacions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 1998).

6. Method whereby rum is heated (burnt) together with other ingredients, such as sugar, coffee beans, or lemon, to obtain a less alcoholic drink, which is thought to be beneficial for some minor ailments, such as colds.

3

Cooking

Since the early twentieth century Spain has changed from a prominently rural and agricultural country into a modern industrialized nation that ranks among the top 10 world's economies, and into one of the pillars of the European Union.[1] This process has brought along deep cultural and social transformations, which have affected both the structure of families and the distribution of working and leisure time, and consequently, the timing of all those activities related to food, both inside and outside the home.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF WOMEN'S ROLES IN THE HOME AND AT WORK

At the onset of the twentieth century Spain was undergoing a crisis: it had just lost a war against the United States (1898) as well as its last American and Asian colonies (Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines). In general terms, Spanish society was chiefly agricultural and women occupied a subordinate position within the home, where they were responsible for house chores and child raising. However, women's activities were not confined to household duties, as they also worked in the fields and tended farm animals. In some cases, they worked in factories, as maids, or even doing extra piecework at home to contribute to the household income.

Women were in charge of household chores, and among these, cooking was a primary activity. On one hand, women did the shopping and the

cooking, managing the scarce economic resources of the lower strata of the population. On the other, over generations they were the repositories and transmitters of culinary lore, family culinary recipes, and traditions.

During the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1936), women acquired a modern and urban role and Spain was one of the first European countries to allow female suffrage and to rely on various female deputies and ministers. Yet, this was only a brief parenthesis, which ended with the establishment of a fascist dictatorship after the bloody Civil War (1936–1939). The new government brought back a more traditionalist conception of women, emphasizing their role as "queens of the house," wives, and mothers. The kitchen again was the place where women carried out their main household activities, and they continued to be the ones in charge of buying and cooking food. In this period, the nurturing and caretaking role was reflected and endorsed by the advertisements related to food and household chores, which exclusively addressed women, emphasizing the tasks and duties that housewives were expected to carry out.

Women's confinement to the domestic milieu would continue until the 1960s and 1970s, with the imposition of democracy. Then, women recuperated their place within the public sphere of life, entering the political, social, cultural, and labor worlds. All this would trigger important changes in the domestic environment, and consequently, in what was related to food and cooking practices.

With the incorporation of women into the paid workforce, the time that used to be devoted to buying and cooking food was spent on public and productive work. From this time onward, as in other industrialized Western countries, women spent less time buying and preparing food. In recent decades, household appliances have become increasingly essential in the kitchen as timesaving devices. The elaborate dishes of grandmothers and mothers have now been replaced by ready-made dishes or simpler recipes. In addition, children, who some years earlier used to eat in their homes, have started to eat their lunch at school with ever-increasing frequency, because their mothers work outside the home. In homes where extended families live together (something that has become less common) the role of grandmothers with respect to the preservation of eating habits and to family nurturing is very important. Another change was that dinner became the one meal that all the family members ate together (women were still mostly in charge of preparing it), though after working all day, families would now appreciate quick and easy-to-prepare dishes.

While women are responsible for preparing food, men (in various parts of the country) are often in charge of outdoor cooking and of special cele-

brations that involve roasting and grilling chops and sardines, and cooking *paella*. Outdoor cooking is usually done for holidays, either for family or guests. Domestic cooking is still a woman's task, while "exterior" or "public" cooking traditionally falls within the masculine range of activities.

An interesting phenomenon relative to gendered cooking practice is that of the gastronomic societies of the Basque Country, created in the nineteenth century, where men cook for their fellow members (see also the Basque Country section in Chapter 4). It is highly significant that, until very recently, these gastronomic societies have not admitted female members (except as occasional guests on specific holidays). This practice is still maintained in the most traditional societies.

Nowadays, complete equality between the sexes, as far as domestic duties are concerned, has not been yet reached. However, much as been achieved, and it can be foreseen that such equality will certainly be reached in the future. The incorporation of women into the public world implied a slow, but significant, incorporation of men into domestic activities, including cooking. Other changes include the transformation of the familial unit, traditionally made up of a married couple, children, and grandparents, into a wider variety of family forms: heterosexual and gay married and unmarried couples, with or without children (incidentally, Spain has one of the lowest birth rates in Europe), one-parent families (singles, widow/widowers, divorcees), and so forth. All this has had important repercussions on shopping and food preferences, as well as on who is in charge of cooking. In the urban milieu, although not exclusively there, food comfort, quickness, and food security have become of primary importance.

It is worth noting that, like other industrialized societies, Spain is witnessing a revaluation of cooking and resurgence of traditional products and dishes, possibly as a reaction against the increasingly industrialized and uniform ready-made cuisine. The widespread renewed taste for homemade food, family recipes, and so forth is taking place within a global context of rapid social change toward gender equality in all aspects of life.

COOKBOOKS

Cookbooks have always been important in Spain. In general, it can be observed that from the eighteenth century onward, Spanish cookbooks would faithfully include recipes and methods by great cooks of the previous century, and that French innovations would be introduced much later. The book *Arte de Cocina (The Art of Cuisine)* by Martínez Montiño,

written in the seventeenth century (1611), was re-edited a number of times during this century, while new culinary books were scarce. Among them are the works of Juan de Altamiras like *Nuevo arte de cocina sacado de la esuela de experiencia económica* (*New Art of Cuisine from the School of Economic Experience;* 1786). Also the cookbook of Domingo Hernández de Maceras was important and also re-edited (less than Martínez Montiño's cookbook) in this period. Published in 1607, this cookbook describes dishes that go back to the "big culinary Spanish tradition" of the sixteenth century.

The French influence was strong from the nineteenth century on and resulted in a large quantity of cookbooks, mostly anonymous, that were translated or copied all over Spain. However, as a reaction against this tendency, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a revaluation of folklore and of the products of popular culture, including food. As a result, various cookbooks were written that illustrated the peculiarities of the diverse Spanish gastronomies.[2]

The most complete and influential recipe book published in Spain in this period was the work of the marchioness of Parabere, and it was re-edited countless times after its first 1933 edition. The book includes the outstanding work of cook Ignacio Doménech. Throughout the century male and female cooks wrote a number of books on popular cuisine that were addressed to housewives; they provided recipes, tips, and advice on household economics.

As the century advanced and "women's magazines" became widespread, especially from the 1960s onward, recipes became an essential element of such publications and both local and international cuisine became popular. Likewise, the number of cookbooks progressively increased, and they broadened their scope, including more information on exotic and foreign gastronomies, as well as practical, traditional, monastic, healthy, Spanish, regional, and Mediterranean cuisines.

PROFESSIONAL COOKS AND CHEFS

While during the twentieth century the home had been mainly a female space, the "public sphere" and thus, commercial cooking, as mentioned, has been a typical male environment. Whereas housewives were great, unknown cooks, professional male cooks became the trademark of their own restaurants and publicly exhibited their gastronomic skills. Conversely, women who worked in restaurants occupied a secondary and largely ignored position.[3] Female authors who wrote quality cookbooks were an exception.

Although the gastronomic activities of hotels and restaurants have been famous ever since the nineteenth century, it was only well into the twentieth century that the fame of chefs started to transcend their own kitchens, and that they became socially prominent. Toward the late twentieth century, some Spanish cooks started to gain international renown. The success of famous chefs (such as Ferran Adrià, Juan Maria Arzak, Santi Santamaria, or Karlos Arguiñano) is due to traditional cooking on one hand (Basque and Catalan cuisines, to mention the most prominent ones), and investigation into new culinary techniques on the other. In recent years, however, women have joined the ranks of famous international cooks (e.g., Carme Ruscalleda and Elena Arzak). Recently, cuisine has also invaded the media. Various cooks conduct radio and TV programs, write articles, and are in charge of specific magazine sections, reports, and so forth. This is due to the fact that the Spanish population is greatly interested in cuisine and gastronomy; but at the same time, such programs reflect the Spanish society with its changes and new needs. For example, some of them deal with homemade and popular dishes, others with *haute cuisine*, and others are addressed to particular groups, with themes such as "cooking for singles" or "easy and quick cooking."

PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT

The Iberian Peninsula occupies a strategic position between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, between Europe and North Africa; thus, it is culturally and historically at the crossroads between Asia and America. Over the centuries, as a result of the influence of various civilizations, the exchange and distribution of diverse culinary traditions and products took place in the peninsula, and its gastronomy became a combination of many different cuisines. It is worth noting that a cuisine is made of procedures rather than recipes; and that new products are assimilated or rejected by "culinary lore" depending on whether or not they are accepted into existing cooking practices. Thus, foods are either easily integrated into traditional eating habits or excluded by the culinary corpus in question.[4]

Procedures

Despite the wide variety of products and dishes of the various Spanish cuisines, some common culinary procedures, with major or minor variations, can be found all over the Iberian Peninsula. Sometimes, the same methods can be found in Europe or the greater Mediterranean area. Some

of the most common Spanish cooking procedures are addressed in the following sections.

Roasting, Grilling, and Pan Broiling

Roasting, grilling, and broiling have been mainly used to cook meat, although fish, vegetables, and dried fruits are also prepared in these ways. Roast meats are quite popular all over Spain in all their varieties: roast lamb, roast piglet, grilled rabbit, and lamb ribs (in various sauces, for example, in *allioli* sauce). For fish, *sardinadas* (sardine barbecues) are very common in the Cantabrian area, and in the north of the peninsula in general, where this fish is consumed fresh and grilled. Vegetables are also grilled, such as Catalan *calçots* (grilled tender onions), for example, which people usually eat when spending a day in the countryside. In the north of the Peninsula various restaurants are known as *asadores*, after the name of the spit used for roasting *(asador)*. The most renowned ones are in the province of Burgos and Castilla León, and they specialize in roast meat.

Pan broiling consists of cooking food (meat, fish) on a metal pan that has been heated until red hot.

Pickling

Pickling is a popular way of preserving food in Spain, avoiding contact with air and bacteria. Certain foodstuffs, mainly vegetables, such as cucumbers, onions, carrots, and peppers, are easily preserved with this procedure. Olives are usually marinated in salt, water, and herbs. Meat and fish may also be preserved by pickling.

Marinade

Escabeche is a very popular marinade in which fish and meat are macerated. It is made of olive oil, vinegar, garlic cloves, and various spices and herbs (laurel, thyme, fennel, dill, etc.). The most common pickled foods are tuna, mackerel, sardines, and game, which become more tender in a marinade. Occasionally, marinades are also used as sauces and added to food while cooking.

Stews

Stews differ from soups and stocks in that the juices of the cooked ingredients are more concentrated and turn into a liquid sauce that is used

to accompany the dish and add flavor. During the Spanish Golden Age (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), there was a very popular stew called *olla podrida* ("rotten pot"): various foods were boiled in the same pot for some time (even for a few days), and more ingredients and water were added as the stew thickened and the stock evaporated. Nowadays, stews are a very common dish in Spanish cuisines; they are chiefly made with meat and vegetables (such as the popular bean or lentil stews, for example, to which meat chops, pork ribs, sausage, etc. are added).

Frying and Deep Frying

In Spain, frying consists of cooking food in a pan, almost always in boiling oil, and mainly olive oil (less often in fat or lard). Fried dishes have been popular in Spain since early times, as Diego Velázquez's famous seventeenth-century painting "Old Woman Frying Eggs" (in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh) demonstrates. Until the twentieth century, most foods were fried in pork lard. Olive oil, a lighter fat, became predominant in the last century, though it had already been used in the past, mainly during Lent, when meat and animal products were prohibited for religious reasons. In the Golden Age, Jews and Muslims cooked with olive oil because their religions forbade pork consumption. Thus, using pork lard turned into an important marker of religious identity. As Bachelor Andrés Bernáldez (sixteenth century) observed in his work *Historia de los Reyes Católicos, don Fernando y doña Isabel*: "they cooked meat with oil, which they used instead of pork fat [. . .] and oil together with meat causes breath to smell; thus, their homes and doors stank of such foods".[5]

Today, food is fried almost all over the Spanish territory, and almost always in olive oil, either directly (potatoes, eggs, vegetables, meat, and fish), or as part of more elaborated dishes (as in the case of the Spanish omelette, or potato omelette, which is made with potatoes that have been previously fried). A popular dish in southern Spain, especially in Andalusia, is *pescaditos fritos*, small-size fish that are deep fried.

Another popular frying method in Spain is frying in batter. Food is first dipped into beaten egg, then coated in flour or breadcrumbs, and last deep fried in boiling oil. Batter is used for frying meat, fish, and vegetables.

Boiling, Bain-Marie, Soups, and Stews

Boiling is a common method for cooking vegetables, eggs, grain, fish, and meat in Spain. It is also regarded as one of the healthiest methods because no fat or other substitutes are added. The fish and seafood soups

made in many regions of Spain, especially in the coastal areas, deserve special mention for their variety and richness. Also worth mentioning are the diverse stews (such as the well-known stew Madrid style, or the Catalan *escudella y carn d'olla*) that are a combination of boiled food, soups, and braised dishes. Stews are made by throwing various ingredients into a pot and bringing them to a boil. Commonly used foods include vegetables, different kinds of meat, chicken, chickpeas, and so forth. When the stew is ready, different dishes are served with the main ingredients separated: a bowl of soup first (to which some kind of pasta may be added) and then, separately, vegetables and pulses (if there are any) and the boiled meat (some of it previously seasoned with spices, to make it tastier). A similar procedure to boiling is bain-marie cooking. In this case, food is put into a double boiler so that it is only indirectly heated. This method is used for foods that cannot be heated directly, that are not desirable to boil, or that change if warmed up (such as solid chocolate for example, which would melt).

Baking

The first baking ovens were used for baking bread and were traditionally heated with wood. In the course of time, ovens have turned into one of the almost omnipresent elements in the Spanish kitchen, especially among the middle and upper classes and later on, after the modern age, also among the lower classes. Ovens were either placed in one of the kitchen walls, near the floor, or else they were an independent cavity, leaning against the wall or fixed to it. Sometimes they were in a separate room, inside or outside the house (in the yard, for example, if there was one). Ancient wood ovens were replaced, already in the nineteenth century, by charcoal ones, and later on by electric and gas ovens. A wide variety of foods can be cooked in the oven: from bread and cakes to meats and various kinds of fish and foods, such as pasta, purees, and even snails. Bread ovens are particularly popular, to the extent that in some areas of Spain, bakeries are known as “ovens.” The microwave oven is quite popular today. In 1988, 1.6 percent of Spanish families had a microwave oven at home; in 1997, this number was increased to 39.2 percent.[6]

Jams, Jellies, Honey, and Alcohol Preserves

Jam is a preserve made with fresh fruit or other similar products, such as tomato for example, cooked with sugar or honey. As in other countries,

jams and jellies are very popular in Spain, particularly because this method allows the preservation of fruit, a food that is highly perishable, for a long time. The candying process, that is, coating fruit in sugar, also facilitates preservation; besides, it turns fruit into a tasty sweet, which is common throughout Spain. In Spain, as in all Europe, both techniques became widespread from the sixteenth century on, due to a greater availability of sugar, and the foods, thus prepared, gained some fame as medical and healthful preparations. In any case, in Spain, since early times, it was common to coat fruit and other kinds of food in honey to isolate them from air and bacteria. Also worth mentioning is the introduction of fruit (and other foods) into spirits or liquors made from those very fruits (cherries, raisins, plums, etc.).

Drying and Salting

The drying technique is generally used in combination with others, such as salting. Common salted foods in Spanish cuisines are fish (codfish, or the renowned *mojama,* that is, dried and salted tuna), mushrooms, various kinds of sausage, and hams. Special places in the mountains are particularly renowned for drying and salting sausage: Mount Moncayo in Aragon and Alpujarra in the province of Granada, for example. In combination with drying, salting—which consists of covering food in various layers of salt—helps remove the liquids, facilitating the drying process and, thus, leading to better and longer preservation.

Salads

In Spain, and particularly in the Mediterranean area, salads are more than a recipe. They are a very typical combination of great-tasting ingredients (vegetables, olives, legumes, but also fish, seafood, ham, sausages, and fresh and dried fruits) and easy preparation. Variety, simplicity, and freshness and also flavor and color are essential. Salads are made and consumed every day with fresh products bought in local markets and are present at almost every table. The usual dressing is also easy, but tasty: olive oil, vinegar, and salt, with or without black pepper.

Kitchens and Equipment

Cookware and kitchen utensils have evolved notably in Spain in the last century. A brief general account of the most common materials and

instruments will be offered here, together with a description of more specific Spanish utensils.

The Culinary-Domestic Space

Between the 1950s and the 1960s, during Francisco Franco's dictatorship, Spain (chiefly in the north) reached its apogee in terms of development and industrialization. During the 1960s, Spain lived a kind of "technological revolution" in the home (mostly urban, but not exclusively) and particularly in the kitchen, saving time and effort.

Maybe the biggest and most rapidly introduced "technological" element in Spanish kitchens is the refrigerator, popularly adopted in the 1960s. Home freezers became common in the 1970s. Both are now standard in Spanish kitchens. The use of frozen produce has also increased. In rural areas, the freezer has largely replaced the older tradition of home canning fruits, vegetables, and meat for storage. The freezer in country households is quite large and it contains the produce of the garden and meat when home raised or bought from friends or neighbors.

Gas was introduced as a cooking fuel for commercial kitchens in the late nineteenth and twentieth century, when electricity also made an appearance. Fireplaces and hearths were first replaced in homes by the "economical stoves" with various hobs or rings, fueled by wood at first, then by coal (mainly *coque*), petrol, and finally electricity and gas. Gas and electricity are now the most important fuels for cookery. In many homes—mostly urban—the typical gas is butane. Gas (butane or, chiefly, "natural" gas, as it is called in Spain) or electricity is now preferred for cooking and is standard in most Spanish kitchens. A few additions have also been made in the last years, such as timers, automatic ignition systems, and vitro-ceramics stoves: 35.5 percent of Spanish homes have an electric, vitro-ceramics stove.[7]

In urban contexts, the kitchen replaced the older, moveable furniture, such as dressers and freestanding cupboards with a marble top (or similar surface), replacing very often the ancient tables. During the 1960s, other consumer goods were progressively acquired: mixers, pressure cookers, electric coffee grinders, coffee makers, espresso machines; and in the early 1970s other appliances were obtained, such as freezers (first, a refrigerator with a freezer in the same item, and later separate or special items), smoke extractors, electric toasters, meat grinders, electric juicers; and later (1980s) yogurt makers, electric knives and can openers, and so forth. Many of them, such as the electric mixer, are useful for

popular preparations or sauces, such as the traditional mayonnaise or *allioli*.[8]

The microwave oven was introduced in the 1980s and developed in the 1990s. It has become a popular item in many kitchens, mainly for defrosting and reheating.

The slowest to become established is the dishwasher, more and more present in Spanish homes (in 42.4% of Spanish homes, up from 10% in 2003), particularly in the new apartments, flats, or houses. The percentage of Spanish kitchens that have a deep fryer is 49.4 percent.[9]

A well-designed kitchen made with fashionable materials has become a status symbol. Spanish kitchens are normally decorated with "traditional" tiles, ceramics, and ornamental objects. In the nineteenth century, and following the new fashion, the inner walls of a building were covered with tiles, with domestic and culinary scenes, flowers, and so forth. Today, this is still the most common decoration in Spanish kitchens.

Normally, people prefer to eat in the dining room and not in the kitchen (except for a "lonely meal" or a snack, or maybe for a quick coffee in the morning). For that reason, many kitchens do not have a table to eat at (but sometimes, in big kitchens, a table is there for preparing food, even in quite modest houses). Kitchen-offices (popularly called *cocina americana*—"American kitchen") are only found in small, urban apartments or in summer apartments.

Earthenware Utensils

Earthenware objects of all shapes and sizes have always been used in Spain. Pitchers, pots, stewpots, casseroles, *escudillas* (bowls), and jars can be porous—for refreshing water or wine—or waterproof. They have traditionally been used to carry and to keep water, oil, fruits, meat, and spices; and also to stew and eat. Most kitchenware is still used. However, tableware is now made of glazed and decorated ceramics, or even glass.

Earthenware is still made in potteries—*ollerías* or *obradores*—thanks to ancient techniques that have been preserved. However, the art began to decline in the second half of the last century.

Casserole Dishes

Clay *cazuelas* (terra-cotta dishes or casseroles) have been used in Spain for hundreds of years. *Cazuelas* are made with moistened clay, low fired with an interior glaze so it can hold liquids. *Cazuelas* are one of the origi-



Popular red clay casserole dishes.

nal vessels used for a developing cuisine. They may be brought to the table straight from the oven. The glaze on the *cazuelas* contains no lead, so it is safe for all cooking applications.

Due to its excellent quality and the special flavor that it gives to stews, the *cazuela* (also a generic name for casserole) is the most important piece, and it is normally placed directly over the heat source. Terra-cotta holds the heat and keeps food at its best for a long time.

Made in several sizes and shapes, the most widely known is the round one, which comes in different sizes:

- A 4-inch diameter dish is a handy size to serve *tapas* such as olives, almonds, capers, and so forth.
- A 6-inch diameter is a handy size to cook and serve many dishes directly to the table; also for serving *tapas*.
- A 7.5–8, 12–13, and 15-inch diameters are some common sizes to cook many dishes, such as rice, pulses (such as beans or peas), and so forth.

Before using a terra-cotta *cazuela* for the first time over stovetop burners, it must be presoaked in water.

In addition to the traditional (round) casserole, there are oval and rectangular ones (also known as *asadores* "spits") adapted for ovens.

Pucheros (stewpots) are large pots of clay used mainly for stews, as they give them a special taste and retain heat longer.

Serving Bowl for Olives

This (very recent) bowl solves the age-old problem of what to do with the pit of the olive one just ate. It is just a ceramic bowl (very often hand-painted) with a small side (or inside) bowl for pits, and very often also another small holder for toothpicks *(palillos)*. One puts the olives in the bowl, a bunch of toothpicks in the small holder or side bowl, and the remaining small bowl is for the pits (called "olive bones"—*huesos de oliva*).

Tortilla Flipper/Server

The tortilla server is a big ceramic plate used to flip the *tortilla de patatas* (Spanish omelette or potato omelette) to cook the other side.



Stand of red clay casserole dishes in a popular market, Salamanca.

Porcelain Casseroles

Porcelain casseroles are actually made of red, enameled metal.

Metal Cookware

Aluminum is used for all sorts of pots, casseroles, and particularly frying pans. Copper is the best heat-conducting metal and it is ideal for cooking jams, sugar syrups, or even chocolate, such as in the ancient *chocolateras*. Currently, copper is not used very much, particularly because it is expensive and difficult to clean. Cast iron is still very popular. It is heavy, durable, and an excellent conductor of heat. Although enameled iron, aluminum, or other materials are actually better than cast iron, many housewives prefer the old-fashioned *sartenes* (frying pans) made of this metal. Stainless steel is now the most popular material for stewing, boiling, and so forth. It is "modern," clean, and durable.

Casserole dishes come in a variety of shapes and sizes. They have lids and are useful for slow and prolonged stewing or baking in the oven.

Frying pans are usually made of aluminum with a nonstick coating. There is also the traditional cast iron pan. The cast iron frying pans are ideal for egg omelettes *(tortillas)*, and particularly for Spanish omelettes. After using them, they must not be washed, but rather cleaned with a paper tissue.

Tortilla de Patatas **(Potato Omelette or Spanish Omelette)**

Ingredients

- 1 cup olive oil
- 4 large potatoes (peeled and cut into small cubes)
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced (optional but typical)
- 4 eggs
- salt to taste

Preparation

Heat the oil in a frying pan and add potato cubes. After a few seconds, add the slices of onion, cooking slowly on medium heat. Turn occasionally until potatoes are tender, but not brown. Simultaneously, beat eggs in a large bowl with a fork, and add salt to taste.

Drain the potatoes, and add potatoes to beaten eggs (in the bowl), pressing them so that eggs cover them completely. Pour the potato-egg mixture into the frying pan, spreading quickly. Increase the heat to medium-high. Shake pan to prevent sticking. When potatoes start to brown, put a plate (or a tortilla flipper)

on top of the frying pan and flip to cook other side. Brown on the other side and flip up to two more times, and the "tortilla" is ready.

Ollas (pots), which have higher sides than casseroles, have traditionally been used to cook vegetables, pasta, stews and so forth.

The *paella* pan is a round, metal pan with two lateral, symmetrical handles traditional and essential in homes and restaurants alike for cooking the popular rice dish bearing the same name, as well as other derived dishes, such as *fideuà* (a noodle-based dish). They come in different sizes, normally: 10, 13, 15, 18, or 22 inches (for 2, 4, 6, 8, or 12 people, respectively). The traditional *paella* pan is made of cast aluminum that weds the virtue of the traditional *paella* pan with modern nonstick technology. The coating prohibits the crispy crusting on the bottom of the pan, which some people savor. The normal steel *paella* pan will change color and absorb flavor as it is used. There is also a stainless steel *paella* pan. For cooking at home, if the *paella* pan is bigger than the heat source (18 or 22 inches, for example) it is also necessary to have a special burner that cooks rice (or noodles, in the case of cooking *fideuà*) uniformly.



Pan for cooking *paella*.

Utensils

In Spanish kitchens, many different types of spoons are used. Wooden spoons are adequate for cooking different stews, pulses, or vegetable *potajes*, and so forth (metal utensils are not recommended in those cases because their metallic flavor can be transferred to the stew). Metal, round spoons (stainless steel is very common) are normally used for scooping and stirring (useful in many dishes, such as popular *paella* or *migas*), serving spoons are for serving dry dishes, and ladles *(cucharones)* are used for serving soups or stews.

Wooden forks are very useful also in stews, thick soups, rice, pasta, and other kinds of similar preparations. Metal forks and skewers are used particularly for meat.

Glass

From the Middle Ages on, glass work became more widespread, too, and luxury items made of glass and gold reached a high level of sophistication. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, it became fashionable to cut glassware out of colored glass. However, connoisseurs would progressively replace these colored glasses with colorless ones, which allowed one to appreciate the quality of the liquids they contained, especially wine. Thus, special glasses were created for each kind of wine: white, red, *cava* (or champagne), dessert wine, brandy, fine wines, such as *fino, manzanilla* or sherry, and other liquors.

Other Interesting Drinking Vessels

Porrón

In many homes, but also in popular restaurants and bars in Spain one will find the drinking vessel known as *porrón*, a glass wine container with a narrow, pointed spout that shoots a stream of wine directly into a drinker's mouth. The *porrón* is probably of Catalonian origin. It is passed around the table. Normally, it is filled with table wine or sweet wine (the smallest models). Drinking from it takes skill and good guzzling ability to keep up with the steady stream of wine. It is never brought to the mouth, but lifted and aimed toward it. For the adept drinkers, the arm should eventually be straightened.

Bota (Bota Bag)

The *bota* is a typical goatskin bag that holds about a liter of wine. The interior is coated with pitch in the traditional way. The *bota* is also made for sharing the wine and has a nozzle on one end; when the bag is squeezed, the wine is forced out and into one's mouth. Drinking from this also takes skill and good guzzling ability to keep up with the wine directly shot into the mouth. It is used in the countryside, but also in many urban homes and popular restaurants (particularly in the countryside).

NOTES

1. Specific areas like Catalonia or the Basque Country, though, had already undergone a process of industrialization in the nineteenth century, at the beginning of the industrial revolution.

2. Among the numerous publications are the cookbooks by Doctor Trebussem (*La mesa moderna*), José Altamiras (*Novísimo arte de cocina*), Ángel Muro (*Diccionario general de cocina* and *El Practicón*), Pere Alcántara (*La cuyna mallorquina*), and the anonymous *La cuynera catalana*. This cuisine would be revalued throughout the twentieth century, with remarkable works like *La cocina española antigua*, written by Countess Pardo Bazán (1914).

3. The case of the sisters Úrsula, Sira, and Vicenta de Azcaray, owners of a famous restaurant of Bilbao was different: they spent their whole lives in the restaurant kitchen but their books and recipe manuscripts became known thanks to their posthumous publication.

4. Such was the case of maize, for example; this plant was very successful in France and northern Italy but has never had a major role in Spanish cuisines.

5. Andrés Bernáldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Manuel Gómez and Juan de Mata (Madrid: Carríazo, 1962).

6. F. Xavier Medina, *La Cocina en España: Anotaciones* (Barcelona: unpublished report, 1999).

7. Redaction, "La Mitad de los Hogares de las Ciudades Españolas Tienen un Ordenador," Master-Net, http://www.masterdisseny.com/master-net/atrasadas/155.php3.

8. Popularly, a very expanded theory in Spain says that mayonnaise (*mayonesa* or *mahonesa* in Spanish) was invented in Mahón, the city capital of Menorca, in the Balearic Islands, under the French domination (eighteenth century) and this is the origin of the name *mahonesa* (sauce from Mahón).

9. Redaction, "Uso de Electrodomésticos en los Hogares Españoles," Electro-Imagen, http://www.electro-imagen.com/es/noticia/15.

4

Typical Meals and Cuisine by Region

The Spanish climate is generally mild and there are a good number of hours with sunshine daily; this directly affects mealtimes and lifestyles in general.

Although food consumption varies depending on age, gender, social class, and so forth, it is possible to define certain general social patterns.

MEAL TIMES

Eating hours in Spain underwent significant changes in the twentieth century; the most important ones concerned lunch and dinner, which were shifted to a later time of day. Generally, the daily meals are as follows:

- *Desayuno* (breakfast, approximately between 5 and 8 A.M.) Both in the country, where people traditionally get up at the crack of dawn, and in the city, where factory work starts quite early as well, breakfast has never been a big meal. It usually consists of a hot drink, such as coffee, white coffee (with milk or cream), chocolate, or herbal teas (and more recently other beverages such as fruit juice), together with some solid food, either sweet (cookies or *magdalenas*) or salted. Before coffee use spread in the nineteenth century, providing caffeine and thus facilitating an early start in the morning, in some areas it was common (especially for men) to drink a small glass of alcohol, which provided a high amount of calories. Breakfast is usually eaten at home, before leaving, or more quickly in some of the bars that open very early in the morning.

- *Almuerzo* (midmorning meal, approximately between 10 and 12 A.M.) For *almuerzo,* more food is eaten than at breakfast, and less than at lunch. *Almuerzo* may consist of various kinds of rolls (with sausage, cheese, etc.) or even small portions of some kind of stew, accompanied by a glass of wine or other drinks (and currently also by beer). Alternatively, people also drink white and black coffee together with sweet food (this is a variant of the so-called continental breakfast).[1] On holidays and weekends, breakfast and mid-morning snack merge into one meal.
- Aperitif and *tapeo* (approximately between 1 and 3 P.M.) This eating habit is particularly common on festive days and usually consists of a snack, prepared at home and shared with one's family and friends. It usually includes some drinks (wine, vermouth, beer, soft drinks, etc.) and homemade *tapas* (olives, sausage, cheese, seafood, etc.). Alternatively, people go to bars and restaurants to drink and eat *tapas,* which are small portions of food that are different in each bar. *Tapas* include cold cuts and sausage, cheese, seafood, fish, and so forth, as well as more elaborate dishes such as *paella* and *migas.*[2]

  In some areas of Spain, especially in the last century, aperitif has been renamed *vermut* (distilled herb wine), as so much of this is drunk.
- *Comida* (lunch, between 2 and 4 P.M.) Together with dinner, this is one of the main daily meals. In Spain, unlike other European countries where very little time is devoted to lunch, lunchtime generally lasts from one to two hours and the meal is usually a complete one (starter, main course, and dessert). Those who have time to return home for lunch habitually eat with their family. Nowadays, the working time and the distance between the workplace and home make it difficult for people to have lunch at home. As a consequence, most restaurants offer the so-called midday menus (based on the three-course pattern), which provide a complete meal at low cost. This meal has been traditionally considered a social occasion, so it is common for people to meet for lunch, either with relatives, friends, or coworkers. Wine, together with water, is the traditional drink. Today, however, the consumption of beer and soft drinks has increased considerably.
- *Merienda* (mid-afternoon snack, approximately between 5 and 7 P.M.) The Spanish term *merienda* stems from Latin *merenda.* It consists of a small amount of food, generally a roll or a cake and a drink, to bridge the time period between lunch and dinner. Although everybody has *merienda,* it is more commonly associated with children, who eat it as soon as they finish their afternoon classes.
- *Tapeo* (between 7 and 9 P.M.) Whereas midday aperitif and *tapeo* are limited to holidays and weekends, the *tapeo* that precedes dinner is a widespread weekday practice. In various areas of Spain, in fact, it is common to meet friends, relatives, and colleagues for a drink and a *tapa* after work and before dinner.
- *Cena* (dinner, between 8 and 11 P.M.) Dinner is usually the last meal of the day. On weekdays it is confined to the family and is actually the time when the dif-

ferent members of a family can get together. The typical structure of a dinner coincides with that of lunch: a light starter, such as soup, salad, or omelet, followed by fish or meat, and a dessert, such as fruit. Yet, at home and on weekdays, dinner is usually lighter and simpler, due to its proximity to bedtime. Holidays and celebrations are a different matter. On these occasions, dinner may turn into the heaviest meal of the day, both in the home and in restaurants, which become crowded with people.

Spaniards usually eat much later than other Europeans. The difference is particularly evident in regard to lunch and dinner, which are eaten about two hours later than in other European countries. Whereas in places such as France and Switzerland, lunch is at about 12 P.M., in Spain it is around 2 or 3 P.M. (even later on weekends and on holidays). Likewise, in certain European countries dinner is at about 7 or 8 P.M. (and earlier in places further north, such as Norway, where people may have dinner at 4 P.M.), but in Spain it is had between 9 and 10:30 P.M. (and even later on holidays and weekends). A recent study shows that the daily distribution of meals in Spain corresponds to a different distribution of the working hours; the Spaniards' workday may stretch until 7 or 8 P.M., yet, they go to bed later and wake up at the same time as other European workers.[3] In other words, Spanish people sleep fewer hours than other Europeans. This is only a twentieth-century phenomenon. In the nineteenth century, lunch was around 12 or 1 P.M. and dinner at 7 or 8 P.M., depending on the season. These mealtimes progressively shifted into the current pattern during the twentieth century.

Another aspect related to Spanish eating habits is worth highlighting: the *siesta* is a custom that has become an international stereotype. This practice is a consequence of specific climatic and physiological conditions. Lunchtime usually coincides with the hottest hours of the day, especially in central and southern Spain. In rural areas, for example, people commonly wait until the sun is lower in the sky before resuming work. From a physiological perspective, because lunch is one of the main meals, a large quantity of food is ingested, and this causes sleepiness. A *siesta* may last between 10 minutes and 1 hour. In any case, it must be noted that in an urban environment, with productivity concerns, the afternoon nap is confined to weekends and holidays, and not everyone has the chance to rest.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON DRINKS

An important characteristic of the Spanish food system is that drink and food are considered a unity, rather than two separate elements, as

happens conversely in other European countries. Spaniards mainly drink while they have food, be it at lunchtime, dinner, or during *tapeos* (*tapas* were created precisely to avoid drinking alcoholic beverages on an empty stomach). Drinks are taken without any food only after dinner (thus, with a full stomach). Both during lunch and dinner, wine has been, and still is, the traditional drink, together with water. Only recently, since the 1960s, has beer found its prominent place within these drinking practices and so have soft drinks. Even so, wine is still the drink par excellence when it comes to lunch and dinner: red wine for meat, stews, and main courses, and white wine and rosé for starters and fish. *Cava,* sparkling wine, is the chief festive drink and it became so popular in the twentieth century that nowadays celebrations cannot be conceived of without this drink. Last, coffee, in all its variations, also occupies an important role in daily life. It is consumed at breakfast, with the mid-morning snack, at the end of lunch and dinner, and in between meals. Coffee is clearly the most consumed drink in Spain, whereas tea and herbal infusions are not as popular.

CUISINE BY REGION

Spain boasts a great cultural, geographical, and gastronomical diversity. It is a country with high potential both in terms of cultural relationships and of geographical and environmental resources: from the Mediterranean coast, with a mild climate, to the Atlantic coast, which is colder, wetter, and has more vegetation; from the flat and dry Castilian Meseta to the high mountainous ranges. These diverse features make each Spanish cuisine different and unique, as each of them specializes in specific products, flavors, and cooking methods.

The culinary peculiarities of each area also result from the various gastronomic encounters that took place through the centuries in the Iberian Peninsula. As previously discussed, the peninsula has always been a cultural crossroads. Since ancient times, the Mediterranean area has been the main importer of new foods and cultures. Products from the Americas mainly entered through western regions (western Andalusia, for example); the south was closer to North African culture; the north, especially the Cantabrian area, was open to the Atlantic and established trade with northern Europe (Great Britain, for example); last, the central area of the peninsula (mainly Madrid, but also other places related to the Spanish Court) was influenced by the courtly fashions of countries such as Austria, Germany, and France).

All these factors marked a particular evolution in the various Spanish cuisines, giving each of them a specific character and individual features that not only distinguish them from each other and from the cuisines of other countries, but place them (as is the case of the Basque and Catalan cuisines) among the most famous gastronomies in the world. The following sections offer a brief summary of the main characteristics of Spanish cuisines.

Andalusia and Extremadura

Andalusia is a large territory.[4] Its political capital is the city of Seville, and the region is characterized by very different climates and lands, hence, by different foods and dishes. Andalusia has both a Mediterranean and an Atlantic coast, mountains, countryside, and even the largest desert in Europe.[5] In this region grain fields mingle with olive tree groves and what are called truck farms (those that take produce to sell at farmers' markets), and the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts provide a wide variety of high-quality fish. Tuna is very common, but sole, sea bass, hake, red mullet, tope shark, sardines, anchovies, prawns, and shrimp are also abundant. As for cooking methods, frying in olive oil is among the most common (fried small-size fish is a popular dish in Andalusia), but pan broiling, marinating, and stewing are also widespread methods.

Truck farm products, both seasonal and greenhouse, are abundant and varied (the greenhouses located in the province of Almería, in eastern Andalusia, are particularly outstanding; they supply the main international markets all year long). Andalusia also boasts abundant fruit plants, trees, and bushes that produce oranges, medlars, pomegranates, figs, prickly pears, cherimoyas, strawberries, and more recently, tropical fruits such as papaya and kiwi. Native and refreshing dishes are made from vegetables: *gazpacho*, a soup made of various vegetables, served cold, especially in the summer, for example, which is the most famous dish of Andalusian gastronomy, in all its varieties: *ajoblanco* (with garlic and almonds), *salmorejo* (with tomatoes, bread, olive oil, a little vinegar, garlic, and salt), *pipirrana* (no bread, but tomatoes, peppers, and onions). Among the most popular stews are the chickpea stew, spinach and codfish stew, and bean stew, with their high caloric value. As for meat products, pork preparations are particularly outstanding. Among the most renowned Andalusian sausage products are *jamón Iberico de bellota* (Iberian acorn ham) from the Sierras of Huelva and Cordoba, and *chorizos* and blood sausage from Granada and Jaén. There are a variety of meat stews:

these are made with pork (which is actually eaten more in the form of sausage than as fresh meat), bovine (bull's tail stew, for example), lamb (*ajillo*—with garlic, *calderetas*—a kind of stew), poultry (hen and turkey fricassee, duck Sevillian style), and offal (kidney with *jerez,* tripe Andalusian style) all seasoned with aromatic herbs. *Tapas* deserve special mention—small food portions that are eaten as snacks and as an accompaniment to drinks, usually consumed before meals (see also chapters 1 and 5). Some bars offer *tapas* menus with more than 100 specialties, which are eaten while consuming wine or the drink that better suits each of these appetizers. Among the most remarkable *tapas* are ham-based ones, small-size fried fish, prawns, shrimp, and omelets, many of which are typically Andalusian.

As for sweets, cakes are still made with almond and honey, following the Arabic tradition. Some typical sweets, such as *dulce de membrillo* (quince jelly—made with the flesh of this fruit), *alfajores* (made with milk, sugar, flour, cinnamon, and lemon rind), *polvorones* (made with sugar, almonds, lard, flour, egg, and cinnamon), and *mantecados* (similar to *polvorones,* but made without flour and eggs), were traditionally homemade, whereas today they are commercially manufactured. However, the cake-making tradition has been preserved in convents (as happens in other parts of Spain), where various specialties are produced: *yemas* (sweets made of sugar and egg yolks), fritters, pumpkin cakes, puff pastries with candied pumpkin pulp, fruit in syrup, *pestiños,* and so forth.

Andalusian wines are internationally renowned, especially the ones from Jerez (*fino, manzanilla,* aromatic wines, *amontillado,* and sweet wine), Málaga, Huelva, and Montilla-Moriles regions, which have their own designation of origin.

The cuisine from Extremadura is, like the Andalusian one, tasty and varied. Among the most famous products of this region are Iberian pork, and more specifically the *jamónes de bellota* (acorn hams) and other sausages. Lamb is one of the top dishes in Extremadura, and it is cooked in various tasty ways. Large and small game (partridges, pigeons, rabbits and hares, wild boars, and deer) are also abundant in this region. Historically, the fields of Extremadura have always been appreciated by members of the Spanish royal family and nobles, who used them as private game preserves. There are still large rural estates that, among other things, are still used for large and small game hunting.

As Extremadura has no direct access to the sea, the fish is mainly freshwater: the tench, for example, is very popular and competes with trout in

quality; it is prepared in various ways (in a marinade, fried, or in sauce). The cheeses from Extremadura are also worth mentioning: among the most remarkable ones are *Torta del Casar,* the cheeses from La Serena, and the goat cheese from Tiétar. The production of honey (both the aromatic and flower varieties) is also important in this region. The most popular desserts are *rosquillas* (small doughnuts), *técula/mécula* (a highly caloric and tasty dessert made of almonds, eggs, sugar, and lard), as well as other local sweets and pastries that are not well known outside the region. The fruits produced in Extremadura are many and varied: cherries (from the Jerte River valley), melons, apples, peaches, figs, and so forth. As for wine, there is only one designation of origin—Ribera del Guadiana. The wines from Extremadura are not well known, but their quality has improved recently and they have lost their local character, entering the national Spanish market.

Aragon

The region of Aragon, with its capital Zaragoza, lies halfway between the Mediterranean coast and the Castillian Meseta. It is a dry land and the most popular dishes are usually meat based. Lamb is the star product in this region (the famous *ternasco,* or Aragonese suckling lamb, has its own designation of origin). Chicken is another important meat; in the past it was reserved for festivities and it became the base of an important Aragonese dish, chicken *chilindrón* (in Aragon this is a popular way of preparing lamb as well, using tomatoes and red peppers). Among sausage preparations, the ham from Teruel and the Aragonese *longaniza* (typical sausage) deserve special mention. Among the most commonly eaten game are rabbits and hares, stewed in their own blood *(civet),* partridges, deer, and wild boar. Fish, which is mainly freshwater, includes trout and eels, among other kinds. Bread is a basic element of this cuisine and takes many shapes and names in the different Aragonese counties. Traditional cakes, pastries, and other sweets are also popular, such as *guirlache* (nougat made of toasted almond and sugar), chestnuts, candied fruit (such as the "Fruits of Aragon," pieces of candied fruit coated in chocolate), and *magdalenas* (small sponge tea cakes).

As for wine, there are four designations of origin in Aragon: Cariñena, Campo de Borja, Calatayud, and Somontano (all areas that have a long-established wine-producing tradition). Other alcoholic drinks made in Aragon are spirits, fruit liquors (cherry and wild blackberry liquor, for example), and walnut *ratafias,* which are excellent digestive drinks.

Asturias and Cantabria

Asturias and Cantabria are in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, on the Cantabrian seacoast. They both have a remarkably unique cuisine, mainly based on stews, such as the popular Asturias *fabada,* which is cooked very slowly, almost without spices or seasoning, in order to preserve the natural taste of the ingredients. Asturian *fabada* is made with white beans *(fabes),* accompanied by sausage (*chorizo, morcilla,* shoulder ham, etc.) and other ingredients, such as potatoes. There are various recipes for this dish, because the ingredients may vary according to personal taste; some of them include fish (clams and lobster), small game (rabbit or partridge), poultry, and so forth. *Fabada* is the signature Asturian dish, but not the only one: *potes* (a type of thick vegetable soup) are also popular; they are made with diverse foods, depending on the basic ingredient: *fabes, chorizo,* potatoes, or chestnuts.

Fish—both marine and freshwater—and seafood are also very important in these coastal territories: anglerfish, hake, conger, tuna, sea urchins, salmon, trout, goose barnacles, and clams are only a few of the countless species provided by the sea and the rivers of this region. Meats are also a remarkable in this area: both cattle meat (among the most popular dishes are sirloin cooked with strong local cheeses, such as Cabrales and stewed ox), pork (a basic ingredient of the Cantabrian "mountain stew"), game (wild boar and venison), and poultry (especially chicken).[6] Among all these foods, cheese surely plays an outstanding role in the gastronomy of northern Spain. Asturian specialties include various local cheeses (*Gamonedo, Pría, Porrúa, Casín,* etc., made from cow, sheep, or goat milk), the star product being Cabrales, a designation of origin blue cheese of very strong taste, which is internationally renowned. In the mountainous region of Cantabria, milk is high quality, too, and it is used to make highly appreciated cheese and butter. Cantabrian cheeses are strong, and they are carefully manufactured and seasoned. The most popular ones are *Picón,* smoked cheese, and cream cheese.

The Asturian dessert par excellence is milk rice (rice boiled in milk, sugar, cinnamon, and lemon rind), but there are also many other sweet preparations, such as almond cakes, custard millefeuille, *brazo de gitano* (literally "gypsy arm," a kind of roll filled with custard, whipped cream, or chocolate), *tocinos de cielo* (small cakes made with egg yolk and sugar), and *huesos de santo* (literally, "Saints' bones," sweets eaten on All Saints' Day). Cantabria, on its part, is renowned for desserts, such as *quesadas pasiegas* (fresh cheesecakes) and puff pastries.

Asturias and Cantabria are also wine areas. Cider is the Asturian drink par excellence. It is drunk in cider bars or in restaurants and, when possible, on the site where it is produced. Cider is poured from a great height (which requires some skill and marksmanship) into a large and wide glass that is only filled with a very small amount of the drink. It is a convivial drink that fosters conversation and celebration. An outstanding Cantabrian drink is *orujo* (spirit), which is traditionally made and has digestive qualities.

Balearic Islands

The autonomous region of the Balearic Islands consists of two different archipelagos: the Balearic Islands proper (Mallorca and Menorca, the largest islands) and the Pitiusas (Ibiza and Formentera). Discussing Balearic gastronomy is tantamount to speaking of a cuisine that fully exploits the natural insular resources, as well as the various cultures that influenced the archipelago through its history: Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, French, and English, all this on a cultural Catalan base with strong social and political influences of the Spanish state in general (through immigration, for example).

The most outstanding crops in the Balearic Islands are almond trees (which bloom in February and March); almonds have been, and still are, an essential element within the insular traditional cuisine, and so are bread, olive oil, and tomatoes (the Catalan influence can be observed in the preparation of the typical "bread with tomato"). These elements, ably combined, may be a tasty starter to any meal, as well as a nutritive breakfast or afternoon snack. The most renowned cheese in the islands is Mahón, which has a designation of origin. Despite the fact that this cheese was made in various parts of the island of Menorca, it acquired this generic name because it was from the harbor of Mahón from which it was exported. Other products worth mentioning are *cocas*, of Catalan origin and very similar to pizza; they have an elongated shape and are made with fine bread dough. *Cocas* are topped with a wide variety of ingredients and may be eaten both sweet or salted, hot or cold.

Other popular foods are the potatoes from Sa Pobla, the insular "fair peppers" (of yellow color), the purple carrot, and other typical vegetables of this land. Yet, the base of the Balearic cuisine is seafood and meat—together with the omnipresent bread. Traditional Balearic gastronomy results from the intensive fishing and agricultural activities that were carried out before the tourist boom.

Long ago, pork became an almost essential product, and sausage preparations have become quite famous, especially the one known as *sobrasada*. This sausage, which has a designation of origin, is made with spiced pork, mainly seasoned with *pimentón* (smoked paprika), which gives it the unique red color.

Balearic fish is rich in taste and varied, and it is widely used for fish broth, soups, and *suquets* (luscious, brothy fish stews), such as the lobster stew, a specialty of the isle of Menorca. Another fish-based dish is the remarkable *frita de calamar*, made with fried squid and potatoes. Small game and bird game are also particularly appreciated; among popular game dishes are rabbit with onion and duck with olives. Offal dishes also play an important role in Balearic gastronomy, with preparations such as the *frit de freixura* (fried offal).

Delicious desserts can be found on all the islands: cottage cheese casserole and sweet *cocas* with apricot, for example. However, the traditional *ensaïmada* (with the designation of origin Ensaïmada de Mallorca) is the most famous dessert of these islands: it is round and made from sweet bread dough and lard (the so-called *saïm*, which gives the cake its name). It may be plain or filled with candied pumpkin pulp, custard, or whipped cream, with powdered sugar icing on top. Other typical desserts are the small sponge cakes called *quartos*, *flaó* (made with fresh cheese), or almond *gató* (cake).

These delicious desserts are accompanied by a wide variety of traditional liquors (which are also drunk as aperitifs), the most important ones being *Palo de Mallorca* (sweet liquor made with marinated cinchona bark and gentian roots), the typical herb liquors from Mallorca or Ibiza, and the gin from Menorca (legacy of the English occupation during the eighteenth century). There are currently two wines with designations of origin: *Binissalem* and *Pla i Llevant de Mallorca*, examples of the millenary wine culture of the islands. Red wines are more commercialized than white and rosé wines. Also worth mentioning is the designation of origin *Vins de la Terra d'Eivissa*, which protects the highly valued wines made on the isle of Ibiza.

Canary Islands

The Canaries are an archipelago consisting of seven islands located off the coast of northwest Africa and they have a tropical, year-round, sunny climate. Although natural resources are abundant and the islands have been influenced by various cuisines, especially by the Andalusian one, local gastronomy is marked by great simplicity.

One of the basic ingredients of the Canary cuisine is *gofio,* toasted wheat or corn, which may be either the essential part of breakfast, an accompaniment to the various insular stews, or even the base for a unique variety of local nougat. Other simple but tasty preparations are *mojos* (from the Portuguese "molho," meaning "sauce"), sauces that accompany most dishes. M*ojo picón* (hot sauce made with peppers, vinegar, olive oil, garlic, cumin, salt, and paprika) and green *mojo* (a lighter sauce, made with parsley and coriander) are the most renowned. Other kinds of *mojos* are coriander sauce, garlic sauce, saffron sauce (to serve with fish), cheese sauce, and *palmero* sauce (pepper sauce).

Since the Middle Ages, the Canary Islands served as a testing ground for the establishment of new crops, such as sugar cane, intensively cultivated in this area under the Castilian Crown. Subsequently, from the sixteenth century onward, new products were introduced into the islands, which were on the navigation route toward the Americas: tomatoes, bananas, and potatoes or *papas* (which gave way to a smaller local variety, of distinctive taste). These tubers are the base of one of the most famous Canary dishes: *papas arrugadas* (literally "wrinkled potatoes"), which are boiled in their skins in highly salted water, preferably seawater. The *papas* are served with red or green *mojo.* The Canary climate, which is rather different from that of other parts of Spain, is particularly propitious for the cultivation of diverse tropical fruits such as bananas (the most representative product of these islands), papayas, mangoes, avocadoes, and pineapples.

The high quality fish of this area is eaten in stews, salted, or *jareado* (sun-dried and seasoned). Typical fish dishes are *tollos,* made with tope shark, and the traditional *Sancocho* (salted fish that is soaked all night and then boiled together with *papas* and sweet potatoes, served with green or hot sauce). Seafood is also an important product: the most common seafood are limpets, which are grilled during the summer months, and clams. Small game is very popular, such as rabbit (used in the preparation of the typical marinade known as *salmorejo*), kid, and veal.

As for as desserts, the most common ones are *Bienmesabe* (made with honey and ground almonds), *ñames* (pies filled with sweet potatoes, almonds, raisins, or candied pumpkin pulp), *quesadillas* (made with fresh cheese) from the Hierro island, *tortas* (small and tasty cakes), marzipan, and almond cakes.

The Canary islands have ten wines with designations of origin; the most remarkable are El Hierro, Tacoronte-Acentejo, Valle de Güimar, and Valle de la Orotava. Typical drinks are banana liquor and honey-rum.

Castilla y León

Castilla y León is the largest autonomous region in Spain and occupies most of the northern inland territory. It includes the central areas that, in the Middle Ages, were the original kingdom of León and the County (and subsequently Kingdom) of Castile. This area is culturally and historically rich, as it was situated on the pilgrims' route to Santiago; thus, over the centuries, it was constantly crossed by pilgrims on their way to Galicia. Gastronomically speaking, it is characterized by roast meat dishes, mainly suckling pigs and lambs, which are the standout food of this cuisine. In Castilla, the main meat dishes include lamb, hare, rabbit, partridges, and the omnipresent pork. Segovia is famous for its roast piglets and Burgos for its veal chops.

In Castilla y León, which is rather cold in winter, stews and hot soups play an important role. Among the most popular ones are garlic soup, onion soup, trout soup, and *zamorana* soup, made with garlic, ripe tomatoes, and hot chili. Stews are made with a wide variety of pulses: white, black, and red beans, chickpeas, lentils, and so forth, and they are enriched with poultry and pork meat. The *batillo* from León, for example, is made with the pig's backbone, ribs, tail, and abundant meat, all stuffed into the animal's stomach, and this is boiled with potatoes. Sausage, pork product par excellence, occupies the most important position within the gastronomy of this area: ham (from Guijuelo and Ledrada, in the province of Salamanca, and acorn ham, considered one of the best hams of Spain), blood sausage from Burgos, the *farinato*—sweet-tasting sausage that is commonly scrambled with eggs—from the Salamanca area, and *chorizos* (such as the famous Cantimpalo, in Segovia). Among dried and salted meats, the jerked beef from León is particularly popular.

A special place in the gastronomy is occupied by poultry, more specifically by pigeons and partridges. Other special products from the León area are the *empanadas* (pies) of Galician origin and the *hornazos*, a sort of pie filled with abundant sausage and other ingredients, typical of Ávila, Segovia, and especially Salamanca. These foods, which used to be typical of the country, have now became a very "urban" dish. Fish (apart from the inevitable salted codfish) is mainly freshwater. The trout from the rivers of the areas of León and Zamora, small in size and outstandingly tasty, are particularly renowned. Cakes are traditional preparations typical of monasteries and convents, many of which are still active. The most famous are Santa Teresa's yolks, made with egg yolks and sugar. The wines deserve special mention. There are five with designations of origin, but the most distinctive is the one from Ribera del Duero, internationally renowned for its red and top quality wines.

Castilla La Mancha and Madrid

In the center of the Iberian Peninsula are Castilla La Mancha and Madrid, with gastronomies that comprise a wide variety of dishes, made with simple ingredients.

All the natural elements of La Mancha are reflected in its cuisine: the country, the mountains, the small lakes, and the rivers. This flat land has always been a land of farmers; thus, vegetables play a primary role in cooking. The most popular vegetables are eggplants, garlic, peppers, and tomatoes. Green and red peppers, tomatoes, and zucchini are the main ingredients of a popular dish called *pisto manchego,* which can be served hot or cold. Other typical dishes are the *asadillo* (red peppers, chopped and roasted with garlic, tomatoes, and olive oil) or the popular *ajoarriero.* The latter is made with shredded codfish, which is slightly grilled and then cooked in an earthenware pot with peppers, onion, tomato, and garlic. Another common dish is garlic soup (as in Castilla León) and the *migas de pastor* (shepherd's breadcrumbs)—based on fried breadcrumbs, which can be also found in other areas such as Andalusia, Extremadura, Murcia, and Aragon. Breadcrumbs are combined with various ingredients such as sausage, sardines, pickles, and even grapes and chocolate.

As in the rest of Spain, meat is also important in this region; a popular local meat dish is *galiano* or *La Mancha gazpacho* (which should not be confused with Andalusian *gazpacho*), a sort of poultry or rabbit pie made with unleavened, toasted bread. Small game, especially rabbit and partridges, are well liked; and among meats, roast kid is the most popular. The most outstanding desserts and cakes are *mantecados* (lard buns), rum babas, marzipan, and the popular *bizcochá* from Alcázar—a cake soaked in milk, sugar, vanilla, and cinnamon. Cheese deserves special mention: the *manchego* is one of the most well known cheeses. It is eaten all over Spain and it is also the most exported Spanish cheese. Sheep cheese, if preserved in oil, can be eaten even after two years. Wine is the drink par excellence in this region (which boasts the largest wine cooperative in Europe). The most famous wines are the designations of origin of La Mancha and Valdepeñas. Madrid, historically, was close to Castilla La Mancha, as it became the capital of this state in the mid-sixteenth century, and it exerted a unifying influence on the rest of the Spanish regions. The presence of the Spanish monarchy affected Madrid since the Renaissance, both economically and politically and, thus, gastronomically as well. Furthermore, toward the end of the nineteenth through the twentieth century migrants from other regions of Spain left their mark in the form of various culinary influences. This is how Madrid developed its own cuisine, food preparations, lifestyle, and eating habits. Distinctive food practices from Madrid

include the typical breakfast, which can be had in local bars, based on white coffee, butter or oil on toast, and the characteristic thin *churros* (long loop-shaped doughnuts that are fried and sometimes coated in superfine sugar) or the thicker *porras* (bigger than *churros*, and made from the same dough). Later in the day, *tapas* (small portions that accompany drinks) are also very popular.

Churros con Chocolate (*Churros* with Chocolate)

Ingredients

- Olive oil to fry (or other vegetable oil, but never butter or shortening)

Churros

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 eggs
- 1/4 cup sugar
- salt to taste

Chocolate

- 4–6 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 oz. margarine or butter
- 2 cups of milk
- 2 tbs. sugar

Preparation

Prepare to fry the *churros* by heating olive oil in a pan (1 to 1 1/2 inches) to 360 degrees.

To make *churro* dough: heat water, olive oil, and salt to rolling boil in 3-quart saucepan; stir in flour. Stir vigorously over low heat until mixture forms a ball (about 1–2 minutes); remove from heat. Beat eggs all at once; continue beating until smooth and then add to saucepan while stirring mixture.

Spoon mixture into cake decorators' tube with large star tip. Squeeze 4-inch strips of dough into hot oil. Fry 3 or 4 strips at a time until golden brown, turning once, about 2 minutes on each side. Drain on paper towels. Roll *churros* in sugar or dump the sugar on the pile of *churros*, like the pros.

To prepare chocolate for *churro* dunking:

Put the margarine or butter into a double boiler; after a few seconds, add the chocolate (so that the chocolate is only indirectly heated) and half the milk, stirring, until the chocolate has melted. Add some more milk and sugar, whisking constantly, until the chocolate is thickened. Remove and whisk smooth. Pour

and serve in cups or bowls for dunking *churros*. Do not pour over *churros*, but use the mix for dunking *churros* after every bite. Always serve warm.

The dishes par excellence in this area are stew Madrid style and tripe Madrid style. Stew Madrid style can be defined as a synthesis of the various stews prepared in the rest of Spain and even in the United States; recipes vary according to the availability of the ingredients and to climatic conditions. Chickpeas are the most popular pulses in this area. They are not only used in stews, but also in a variety of dishes, most of them homemade, such as chickpeas *potaje* (thick soup), made with chickpeas, spinach, and codfish—a classic dish for Lent. Lentils with *chorizo* and beans also play a special role within the cuisine of this area. The tripe is usually from beef and it is also stewed and habitually accompanied by chickpeas. The establishment of the Spanish Court in Madrid brought a taste for game: wild boar and deer, but especially partridges and pheasants were mainly the prerogative of the nobles. Among fowl, the most popular were hens. Last, offal-based dishes were also very common.

The most distinctive dessert of this area is Easter *torrija* (bread slices soaked in milk, fried, and coated in superfine sugar). As for wine, some of them became popular with the Spanish Court during the modern age, such as those from San Martín de Valdeiglesias. Yet, wine production declined in the course of time, and only toward the end of the twentieth century was a designation of origin created in this area (Vinos de Madrid). The Chinchón anise liquor (which owes its name to a place in the province of Madrid) is worth mentioning as well.

Catalonia

Catalan cuisine has a clear Mediterranean character. Catalonia, with its capital the cosmopolitan city of Barcelona, has always been a cultural melting pot. Thus, it is no wonder that Catalan cuisine should be closely related to other gastronomies; more specifically to those of eastern Spain, the French Mediterranean area, and the south of Italy, regions that Catalonia has had important ties with ever since the late Middle Ages. As in other Mediterranean areas, vegetables such as tomatoes, garlic, onions, and fresh herbs are very important in Catalonia, as well as the omnipresent olive oil, which is the main cooking fat.[7] One of the signature dishes of this region is *escalivada* (a salad of chopped, grilled peppers and eggplant seasoned with salt and olive oil), but Catalonia boasts many other foods that correspond to the different geographical features of the region: from pork and other meat products to fish, fruit (cherries and

pears), and what can be collected from the woods (such as mushrooms). The top product on the coast is Mediterranean fish: sea urchins, rock fish, and fishermen stews (also called *suquets*, see also the Balearic Islands section). Codfish is also a common food in Catalonia, although, as previously observed, it is not captured in nearby waters; typical cod-based dishes are *esqueixada* (with shredded desalted codfish, combined with minced vegetables and olive oil) and cod with raisins, pine nuts, and honey. Mushrooms, grilled or stewed, are among the most popular foods in Catalonia during autumn and a wide variety of them may be found in the woods of this region. Typical of the northern territory of Catalonia (especially in the area of Empordà and the famous Costa Brava) are the dishes that combine sea and land products, such as rabbit with lobster and snails, and chicken with spiny lobster or scampi with pears and plums. Some believe these combinations to be the legacy of Roman cuisine.

During winter and up to the beginning of spring, Catalans ritually eat *calçots* (grilled tender onions dressed with a special almond and tomato sauce), in the company of friends and family, particularly in the province



Mortar with wood handle, cruet (*aceitera*), and garlic cloves (instruments and ingredients for *allioli* sauce).

of Tarragona. These popular meals are called *calçotades*, and their reputation is increasing to such an extent that a number of restaurants all over Catalonia (and not only in the south of the region where this eating practice originated) offer this product as a seasonal gastronomic attraction. Rice dishes are also popular in Catalonia. The delta of the Ebro River is an important, protected rice-producing area. Common rice dishes are *arrossejat* with squid, rice with shrimp and conger, and rice with rabbit and mushrooms. Meat also occupies a privileged place in Catalan cuisine, especially in the northern area. The most common meat dishes are the beef chops from Girona, rabbit and fowl stews, and, of course, pork products. Some of the numerous Catalan sausage preparations were already famous in Roman times, such as the hams from Cerdaña. Other popular, present-day sausages are *fuet* (long-shaped sausage stuffed with lean pork meat), *butifarra* (big spicy sausage, usually grilled and accompanied by dry beans), and the sweeter *butifarra dolça* from Girona.

Creativity combined with simplicity in what is perhaps the most important and renowned Catalan dish: *pa amb tomàquet* (bread with tomato). This preparation is simple but tasty, and it consists of a slice of bread rubbed with tomato, olive oil, and salt, and accompanied by a slice of ham or any kind of sausage or cheese on top. Bread and tomato, which is very close to the famous Mediterranean pizza, may be said to have acquired the status of "national dish" in Catalonia. Within this rich culinary panorama, Barcelona, the capital of this region, has turned into the showcase of Catalan (and international) gastronomic diversity. It was in Barcelona that the emerging bourgeoisie adopted and transformed typical country dishes in the nineteenth century, and it was also here that popular taste was incorporated into the menus of many good restaurants, turning the city into the place with the best gastronomic offerings in Spain. Fine Catalan cuisine is not only a monopoly of Barcelona; excellent restaurants can be found all over the Catalan territory, even in small towns.[8] One of the largest culinary attractions of the Catalan capital is its unique markets: *La Boquería*, the most popular one, originated in the Middle Ages and still preserves the original structure to a certain extent. Other important markets are those of Sant Antoni and Santa Caterina, and the most remarkable of them all: the Born market, which is currently being transformed into a cultural center. Another example of the gastronomic sensibility of Barcelona are the *colmados*; they were initially started as grocery stores, but nowadays they sell food and other products.

Wine is also an outstanding product of Catalonia. Through the ancient Greek settlements of Empúries and Roses, wine crops became part of the

local Iberian food culture and, later on, they were extended and improved by the Romans. Catalonia has always produced red wines. From the 1860s on, production was extended to *cava,* with three different local varieties: *Xarel·lo*, *Macabeo*, and *Parellada*. Today, 11 designations of origin are found in Catalonia, making it the wine region with the largest geographical diversity and variety in Spain. Along with production areas as wide as Penedés (which is the most important one), there are many smaller and more specialized areas. Catalan wine heritage ranges from fresh, light wines to high-quality red wines and sparkling wine of international renown (the famous *cava*).

Valencia and Murcia

The region of Valencia, and its capital city Valencia, have a rich gastronomy, but rice is its foremost product. Rice dishes from Valencia are, indeed, countless. Rice can be prepared in many ways and it can be combined with numberless foods; the cooking method is not only determined by the ingredients, but also by the type of pan/pot used to cook it. If rice is cooked in a deep pot it will be brothy, if it is cooked in the oven it will be drier, and if the famous *paella*—typical flat metallic pan with two handles—is used, the result will be the most international Valencia dish: *paella* Valencia style.

A number of pulse and vegetable stews are typical in Valencia. Some stews are also prepared with meat: cattle meat (ox and beef, which only some decades ago were reserved for festivities), game (rabbit and duck, which are common complements to rice), fowl (mainly chicken), and roast lamb.

The Valencia region comprises a long stretch of Mediterranean coast, which encompasses almost all of eastern Spain. Consequently, the region is rich in fish (conger, hake, sea bass, sea brim, red mullet, anglerfish, etc.), which is fried, roasted, cooked in salt, or with onion. Salting is a common method of preparing fish, such as sardines and dried tuna.

Market gardens are also of prime importance in Valencia. The main products are citrus fruit, vegetables, and potherbs, which this region exports in large quantities (oranges are particularly renowned and even have a designation of origin).

As for desserts, the most internationally renowned is *turrón* (a kind of nougat mostly made with honey and almonds and commonly eaten at Christmas): the most famous nougats are the one from Jijona (soft nougat made with ground almonds) and the one from Alicante (hard nougat,

made with whole or coarsely chopped almonds). Both of these specialties are classified under a designation of origin. Other popular desserts are *arnadíes* (made with pumpkin and sweet potato), typical Easter cakes, *orelletes* ("small ears"), and fritters that come in various shapes.

One of the most distinctive beverages in Valencia is *horchata,* a sweet drink made from pressed tigernuts mixed with water and sugar. There are also a number of designation of origin wines.

Discussing the gastronomy of Murcia means mentioning vegetables, which can be found in most dishes. The cuisine of Murcia, close to that of Valencia, is based on its vegetables, fruits, rice, and wine. Pulse and vegetable stews are popular and are made with a wide variety of ingredients, such as fresh or dry broad beans, fresh garlic, thistle, artichokes, peppers, cauliflower, and green beans. Also worth mentioning are dishes such as the gypsy pot (pumpkin stew) or the wheat stews. Rice is also an outstanding food in Murcia and it is prepared in various ways; the most typical preparation is rice with vegetables, but many other rice dishes deserve special mention, such as rice with rabbit and snails, rice with lean meat and ribs, or *caldero,* a typical coastal dish, made with rice boiled in various kind of fish stock. The most common meat dishes are baked suckling goat, lamb chops with *ajo cabañil,* a mixture of chopped garlic, vinegar and a bayleaf, small game (rabbit, hare, partridges, and quails), large game (deer), and poultry (for example, the "stock with balls," a turkey stew with meatballs, a traditional Christmas dish).

As in the region of Valencia, fish also play an important part in the gastronomy of Murcia, especially the gray mullet, whose roe are considered exquisite, the sea bass, the sea bream, and the small and tasty prawns.

Mediterranean fruit is the main dessert, although there are also some typical sweet preparations, such as *tocinos de cielo* and *yemas de Caravaca* (made with egg yolks and sugar), marzipan, candied pumpkin pulp, rum babas, *tortada* Murcia style (a meringue-based cake), and the *papajotes*, a dessert of Arabic origin made with lemon tree leaves battered in a fine sweet dough and coated in sugar and cinnamon. As for as wine, red wines are prominent. There are three designations of origin—*Jumilla, Yecla,* and *Bullas*—and some other local varieties of good quality.

Galicia

The autonomous region of Galicia is located in the farthest northwestern part of the Iberian Peninsula, on the Atlantic ocean. Its coastline stretches about 250 miles and consists of alternating high cliffs and calm



Dish with different pork products, Galicia.

firths, rich in seafood and fish. Galician fishermen are of prime importance for the economy of the region and likewise, fishing and marine products are essential to Galician gastronomy.

The city of Vigo is currently the main fishing harbor of Europe, and Galician firths are the largest producers of mussels in the world, as well as of other shellfish: goose barnacles, scampi, scallops, mussels, cockles, clams, octopus, sea brim, sardines, sea bass, and many other species. The markets where fish is auctioned present a wide variety of deep-sea species, such as tuna, hake, codfish, pollock, and the savory blue jack mackerel.

The importance that Galician people attach to food is shown by the more than 300 gastronomic festivals held through the year in this region. These celebrations are mainly related to land products and originate from local holidays and all kinds of fairs. Celebrations often coincide with harvesting and religious festivals, such as the pilgrimages to local shrines, usually accompanied by traditional meals.

The coast is surely rich in products, but inland areas equally provide a wide variety of foods: *pimientos de Padrón* (designation of origin peppers), potatoes, turnip tops (tender turnip sprouts exclusively eaten in this part

of the peninsula), different kinds of bread, chestnuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, and almonds, as well as wild mushrooms, blueberries, and wood honey. Farm products are the base of dishes, such as Galician soup, made with different vegetables: chard, green beans, cabbage, turnip tops, potatoes, and beans. Of all Galician meats, bovine products are the most popular ones. Veal is controlled by the designation of origin Ternera gallega. Countless veal recipes can be found in Galicia, such as tenderloin and stew Galicia style. Ox and kid (which is usually roasted) are also very appreciated, and among poultry, roosters and capons, which were traditionally eaten during Christmas season, are popular. Pork is an essential food in Galician gastronomy: *lacón* (a kind of savory cooked ham) is used in the preparation of the famous *lacón* with turnip tops. In the interior of the region, sausages, both dried and smoked, are highly popular, too. Other parts of the pig are used in various Galician stews (bacon, snout, the meat around the vertebrae, feet, etc.). Another important preparation is *empanada:* puff pastry filled with various local products, such as pork rib or sirloin, veal sirloin, sausage, sardines, octopus, codfish, or tuna.

As for cheeses, most of them are made from cow milk. The most distinctive is the *tetilla* or *teta gallega.* The most internationally famous Galician dessert is the popular *tarta de Santiago,* an almond cake. As for alcoholic drinks, there are five designations of origin in Galicia, the most outstanding one being Ribeiro. Among liquors, the most popular one is a Galician spirit *(orujo),* which is also used in the recipe for the traditional *queimada* (flamed spirit with sugar).

Tarta de Santiago (Galician Almond Cake)

Ingredients

- 2 cups of blanched almonds
- 1 cup of sugar
- 2–3 tbs. of butter
- 6 eggs
- grated rind of 1 lemon
- 1/4 tbs. powdered cinnamon
- Powdered sugar for topping

Preparation

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Mix butter with sugar and cinnamon. Separately beat eggs with grated lemon rind until foamy. Grind almonds to fine paste in a mortar or electric blender. Add almonds and beaten eggs to butter and sugar. Mix only enough to blend well. Pour into 9-inch round cake pan that has been lightly

buttered and sprinkled with flour. Bake 25 to 30 minutes in 425 degree oven. Cake is done when a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean and cake springs back if pressed with a finger. Invert cake until it cools before removing from pan.

Place cooled cake on cookie sheet, and coat top of cake with the powdered sugar. The cake should be of a rich brown color and "snowed."

Basque Country, Navarra, and La Rioja

The Basque Country, or Euskadi, is a coastal region that borders France. Its culinary richness and variety are due to the combination of fishermen's traditions with a deep rooted mountain culture. Nowadays,



Pintxos in a bar, Basque Country.

both of these features mingle to create a modern *cusine d'auteur* (author's cuisine) of very high quality, which made its appearance in the last decades with the so-called New Basque Cuisine. Such distinguishing culinary traits are due, above all, to the cultural specificity of the Basque people, who have maintained and improved their tradition and their ancestral language: *Euskera*. The Basque are fond of good food and a large part of their social life revolves around meals. An example of the cultural importance of food in this country are the various gastronomic associations, traditional meeting places, mainly restricted to men, that were created toward the end of the nineteenth century. The members of the associations compete in the preparation of special dishes, contributing to the preservation and recovering of old recipes and bringing fresh energy into the Basque cuisine by revaluing dishes of humble origin but of high culinary value. Until very recently, gastronomic societies did not admit women, except, perhaps, on specific festive occasions. The most traditional associations still do not.

Living on the Gulf of Bizkaia, the Basque people have historically been great fishermen. Their constant fishing expeditions to Newfoundland, ever since the Middle Ages, are reflected nowadays in the massive consumption of cod, a fish that, through the Basque harbors, also reached the rest of Spain. The sauces that were created to go with this fish (for example, *pil pil* is made with olive oil, garlic, and chili pepper; *vizcaína* is made with olive oil, tomatoes, peppers, onion, and garlic; and green sauce is made with olive oil, parsley, green pepper, and garlic) are the particular heritage of Basque gastronomy. Other kinds of fish, such as hake, tuna, sea bream, *txangurro* (lobster), baby squid, anchovies, and the highly valued elvers, are also a must within the culinary offering of this region, and they have inspired the creation of fishermen's stews as popular as *marmitako* (with tuna), baby squid in its own ink, or the particular *kokotxas*, which are traditionally eaten in small coastal villages or public canteens belonging to fishermen's associations. Tuna belly and sardines are mainly eaten roasted. In Euskadi, roasted food, fish, and bovine meat are very popular; the meat is preferred rare and as large chops.

Mushrooms, called *perretxikos* (especially the boletus species) and small game (pigeons, woodcocks, turtle doves) are characteristic of autumn; as in the case of local vegetables. They have become the ingredients of diverse local dishes, such as the peppers from Gernika or the renowned beans from Tolosa. Most traditional dishes are prepared with local products, considering that this is a mountainous region with many isolated farms and valleys.

Many desserts are based on milk: fried milk, *cuajada*, *intxaursalsa* (dairy dessert with walnuts), custard *canutillos* (tube shaped fritters), and *franchipán* (puff pastry cake filled with custard and almonds). Among cheeses, *Idiazábal* deserves special mention. This is usually eaten before dessert. The most popular alcoholic drinks are wine and apple cider. In many cider bars, especially in the province of Gipuzkoa, cider is served directly from huge barrels and the meals consist of dishes, such as codfish omelette or beef chop, served on large, common tables. Yet, the main drink in the Basque country is wine; part of the internationally renowned designation of origin La Rioja is located in the inner Basque province of Alava, a subarea called Rioja Alavesa, which boasts some of the most ancient wineries. Together with *Rioja*, the Basque wine par excellence is *txakoli*, a local white wine, light and aromatic. The practice of *tapeo* (here known as *txiquiteo*[9]) in the Basque country is almost a daily social ritual. In the old areas of the cities, such as the historic areas of Bilbao, Donostia-San Sebastaían, Vitoria, or even in smaller towns, bars are packed one next to the other. Groups of friends successively visit each bar and have some of the different *pintxos* (like *tapas*—small portions) offered on the counter, accompanying them with *txikitos*. Customers seldom take a seat, eating the food and drinks while standing by the counter.

The kingdom of Navarra was the last one to join the union of kingdoms that shaped Spain in the sixteenth century, actually after the kingdom of Granada had been reconquered (1492). Thus, the autonomous region of Navarra shares some cultural and historical characteristics with the Basque country, as well as the language (*Euskera*, the Basque language is spoken in the whole northern mountainous territory of Navarra) and landscape, although it has no coastal area (it stretches southward, toward the inner land). In Navarra, valleys alternate with thick woods and rivers. These geographical features are reflected in the gastronomy, and the dishes change depending on whether one approaches the Pyrenean area, the river shores, or the midterritories, with their green valleys and plains. Typical products of the mountainous territory are milk, cheese (*Roncal* is the most famous), meat (bovine and ovine), chestnuts, hazelnuts, potatoes, abundant tomatoes, borrage, peas, lettuce, peppers, thistle, curly cole, cabbage, and chard. Apart from this variety of food, Navarra is famous for three specific products: the asparagus from the river area, *piquillo pimientos* (peppers roasted over beechwood and peeled by hand), and the artichokes from Tudela.

Most fish is freshwater, mainly trout and salmon. For meat, Navarra shares some eating practices with Aragon, for example, lamb *chilindrón*. Other popular meats include beef, pork, and game (doves, deer, hare, partridge, and quail).

As for wine, although some local wines share with La Rioja and the Basque Country the Rioja designation of origin, Navarra also has its own designation of origin with excellent red wines. Another particularly outstanding alcoholic drink is *pacharán*, typically made by mixing sloe berries with aniseed liquor: this liquor, which was conceived as a medical remedy, is nowadays industrially made, though in Navarra traditional homemade preparations are still frequent.

La Rioja is a small inland region located along Santiago's Way, both a traveler destination and an exchange area and, importantly, the producer of excellent wines (classified under the *Rioja* designation of origin). Its gastronomy has been strongly influenced by that of its neighbors. The cuisine of La Rioja, traditionally an agricultural area, is characterized by vegetables, herbs, pulses, peppers, garlic, onion, artichokes, asparaguses, lettuce, chard, and borrage. Among the most popular La Rioja dishes are the stews based on *pochas* (beans), which preserve the taste of beans, absorbing at the same time that of the quail and *chorizo* that accompany them. Pigs, the symbol of Christian culture, are raised both in the wild and on farms. Lamb chops are a must at the evening meals eaten in the wineries and gastronomic societies and a frequent dish on the menus of restaurants, where they are grilled over fruit canes, acquiring a special flavor.[10] The most typical sausages are sweet blood sausage and *chorizo* Rioja style. Another remarkable dish is potatoes Rioja style, with chorizo or pork ribs.

Fish are a highly traditional food, despite the fact that La Rioja is an interior region. Codfish is surely outstanding (cooked Rioja style, with tomatoes and peppers), as well as sea bream in sauce, mainly eaten on Christmas Eve (as in many other interior regions of Spain). Other remarkable fish dishes are the delicious river crayfish with *fritada* and hake in green sauce. Snails and mushrooms are also a common food in La Rioja and are often combined into one dish.

What has most contributed to giving La Rioja an international reputation is the quality of its wines. La Rioja occupies the center, and the largest part, of the designation of origin area that, as previously seen, it shares with the Basque Country and Navarra. La Rioja produces excellent red wines that are aged in casks for a minimum of 24 months *(crianza)* or 36 months *(reserva)*.

NOTES

1. All over Spain there are many traditional ways of drinking coffee: black, *cortado* (coffee with a dash of milk), "stained milk"(milk with a dash of coffee), and *carajllo* (coffee with brandy). Names, quantities, and cup size may vary depending on the region considered.

2. Dish made with flour or breadcrumbs, eaten in various Spanish regions (see the following section on "Cuisine by Region").

3. Carried out by the Fundación Independiente, *La hora de Europa, la hora de España* (Madrid: Fundación Independiente, 2002).

4. The North African autonomous towns of Ceuta and Melilla are included within the Andalusian area of influence. Their cuisines, halfway between the Andalusian and Moroccan ones, are especially renowned for fish preparations and for Moroccan spices and aromas.

5. The Tabernas desert, in the province of Almería, on the Oriental Mediterranean coast of the peninsula.

6. The most important national livestock fair, that of Torrelavega, is held in Cantabria.

7. There are two designations of origin for olive oil in Catalonia: Garrigues and Siurana, both obtained from a fruity and small olive species known as *arbequina*.

8. As is the case of *El Bulli* in Roses (Girona), run by Ferran Adrià, considered internationally as the most creative cook of our time, or of *El Racó de Can Fabes* of Sant Celoni, managed by Santi Santamaria.

9. Term indicating the consumption of *txikitos*, small glasses of red wine or *txakolí*, but also of beer. *Txikitos* accompany the local *pintxos*, small portions of various kinds of food (similar to *tapas*), placed on a slice of bread. *Pintxos* have recently turned into sophisticated gastronomic creations.

10. On festive occasions it is traditional for friends and family to meet in the household cellars where wine is kept to mature, in order to eat an afternoon snack or have dinner.

5

Eating Out

At present, eating out is a much-discussed mass phenomenon in all Europe. In general, Spaniards are keen on eating and drinking out, as their lifestyle and traditions show. The Iberian Peninsula encompasses a wide variety of climates, but the temperatures, typical of a southern European country, are never extreme. A mild climate allows for outings and outdoor celebrations almost any time of the year, which results into a lifestyle where "going out," sociability, and commensality are held in high esteem.

It appears that the Spanish consumption pattern, in general, falls within the Mediterranean consumption profile, as in France and Italy.[1] Thus, in terms of time devoted to leisure and personal relationships, Spaniards, unlike the rest of the Europeans, spend a great deal of money on eating out and drinking, especially in bars and restaurants. So much so, that Spain, together with Ireland and Italy, is the country with the highest food budget in the European Union. Among the daily practices connected with leisure, social meetings in bars and restaurants are the most important spare-time activity in Spain, especially for men, while for women it is only a secondary activity. "Eating out" implies kinds of sociability and commensality that can be associated with different spaces, institutions, and groups, characterized by a high sociocultural content. Some of these features are discussed in the following sections.

Fondas and inns *(posadas)* that provide accommodation and food have a long established tradition in Spain, and their services have been usually



Sign in a bar listing different typical foods.

aimed at foreigners and "guests" (tourists).[2] The nineteenth century brought, at least in the main Spanish cities, a consolidation of the bourgeoisie and, above all, of the middle classes; this would strongly affect the consumption pattern and would lead to a consolidation of restaurants.[3] The latter would become established as such, and under this name, at the beginning of the century; they were either new, elitist initiatives or transformations of the dining rooms in the already existing inns and hotels.

In the main Spanish cities (Madrid, Barcelona, and Bilbao, and later on Seville and Valencia) restaurants soon started to proliferate. As for taverns (predecessors of today's bars) and food and drink stalls, they also played an important role on a popular level. They used to be located near

markets and offered drinks (mostly wine) and local food specialties at a very low cost (toward the end of the eighteenth century these facilities started to include tables and long benches for common meals). In Seville, around the mid-nineteenth century there were 446 taverns in the city but only 36 restaurants and cafés.[4]

The kind of food that could be eaten in inns, cafés, and restaurants may be classified thus: local, Spanish, "French," and "foreign."[5] As has been observed in previous chapters, the French influence was particularly strong in Spain from the nineteenth century onward. French *haute cuisine* became the model to follow in the best restaurants, which imitated French recipes and style to satisfy an incipient influx of wealthy tourists. Local cuisine, however, was appreciated mostly by the populace. On some occasions, French recipes were adapted to local products and techniques; the result, far from being genuine French cuisine, was yet promoted as such. For a long time, the terms *fonda* and *restaurante* were confused by the population and they were used to indicate similar establishments. Yet, little by little, the word *restaurante* became distinguished from *fonda* because



Popular tavern (*taberna*) in the center of Seville.

it denoted a place where wealthier customers could enjoy more sophisticated dishes and better service, as well as a novelty: wine menus that included better quality products, imported from different places and even from abroad.

In the nineteenth century, the first gastronomic societies or *txokos* were founded in the Basque Country. In these places, which were exclusively for men, members cooked and shared meals; they recreated recipes and investigated, creating new dishes.

Another novelty in the Spanish panorama of the late nineteenth century were beer pubs, initially like cafés, which specialized in serving cool beer.[6] At this time, the first beer breweries were created in Spain, but their number dramatically increased from the 1920s on, and through the rest of the twentieth century. Taverns, which would later evolve into bars, also proliferated in this period. In Madrid, in the 1920s, already more than 2,000 establishments sold alcoholic drinks. *Tapas*, which are now considered traditional, were a novelty introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although their historical antecedents date back to earlier times, during this period *tapas* became part of the public and popular gastronomic offering and multiplied into many different specialties.

The 1930s were marked by the deposition of the monarchy and the restoration of the second Spanish Republic as well as by the Spanish civil war (1936–1939). This was a time of crisis and conflict that would be followed by the postwar era and by a general scarcity of food. Consequently, catering establishments did not fare well and many of them shut down, while others survived after overcoming great difficulties. The postwar period was characterized by lack of food, a dictatorial regime, and the predominance of the Catholic Church, which imposed restrictions on entertainment facilities (such as dancing halls, for example). Although the visits to restaurants decreased, due to lack of resources, bars and the practice of *tapeo* enjoyed greater success during these years of scarcity, especially in the south and the center of Spain, because a few small *tapas* could replace lunch or dinner. All over Spain there were internal migrations from the country to the cities, especially to Barcelona and Madrid. Various restaurants, which were opened as a consequence of the increased population, specialized in local cuisine and in other Spanish gastronomies. The number of new bars multiplied by approximately 150 between the 1960s and the end of the 1980s. The phenomenon of mass tourism also started in this period; tourists were attracted by the Spanish sun and beaches and this triggered a transformation of coastal areas,

which became crowded with hotels, restaurants, bars, and leisure facilities. Tourist menus made their appearance, as well as the "typical" dishes, such as *paella* and *sangría*, which would turn into tourist banners of Spanish gastronomy. New dishes were invented in this period, such as the mixed *paella* (which combines fish and meat), a specialty that was created exclusively for tourists and subsequently became successful with the local population as well.

Since the restoration of democracy, toward the mid-1970s, and Spain's entry into the European Community in the mid-1980s, there has been a burgeoning social and economic advance. Not only has tourism been increasing, but it has evolved to include cultural, sports, adventure, urban, and congress-related services (besides the traditional offer of sunny resorts and beaches). Accommodation and catering services have also developed in measure, seeking to achieve higher quality and targeting wealthier consumers. Spain currently ranks third among the countries with accommodation capacity, following the United States and Italy, and it has the second highest number of foreign visitors, after France.

EATING OUT TODAY

Bars

Bars are, perhaps, the most popular establishments in Spain and there are about 200,000 of them. They provide drinks and meals (the latter usually on a small scale). People mainly visit bars to have breakfast, *almuerzo* (white coffee, cakes, rolls, etc.), aperitif and *tapas*, and in general, all day long in order to have coffee, drinks, and snacks. Bars offer a wide selection of products and prices. Some of them also offer inexpensive lunches (fixed-price menus including starter, main course, dessert, and coffee) chiefly aimed at those who eat outside the home. As far as *tapas* are concerned, it is worth mentioning that Basque taverns (some of them are recently created franchises) have recently become quite popular almost all over Spain. Here customers can have diverse *pintxos* (Basque variety of *tapas*) at inexpensive prices, together with beer and wine. *Terrazas* (outdoor patios) are very popular in the spring and summer.

The tip is never included in the bill (not only in bars, but also in cafés and restaurants), and this is always a personal option solely if the customer has been satisfied.

Cafés

As in other European countries, cafés have been socially important ever since the nineteenth century. In some cases, their fare was similar to that of inns and taverns. Cafés were also the places for artistic and literary get-togethers, and some of them, such as *Els quatre gats*, which reopened, or *Les set portes*, today a very popular restaurant in Barcelona, or the coffee shops of *Gijón* and *Pombo* in Madrid, are still popular meeting places.

The service and hours of business of cafés mostly coincide with those of bars; yet, they mainly specialize in drinks (coffee, liquors, etc.) and snacks (cakes, sweets, delicatessen), and they are more for social gatherings, quiet, and conversation, especially in the afternoon. The most classic coffee shops have a higher status than bars; however, since the 1990s, some coffee shop franchises have been created and are rapidly spreading all over Spain. Their appearance is that of traditional Italian cafés and they combine rather inexpensive prices with a popular appeal.

Restaurants

In Spain there are a wide variety of restaurants that may be classified according to the various kinds of cuisine they offer. They usually open at lunchtime and in the evening, or only in the evening. At lunchtime most establishments (except top-tier restaurants), with a wide variety of food offered, provide inexpensive, fixed-price menus. In the evening, prices are higher. On weekends, especially in big cities where demand is great, dinners are served in two shifts: about 9 P.M. and 11 P.M. Families and friends commonly have lunch and dinner in restaurants on holidays and weekends, a phenomenon that is facilitated by the great variety of restaurants and prices that are affordable to most of the population.

The most basic restaurants offer various Spanish dishes, either local preparations or specialties from other regions. Other establishments include in their menus a number of well-known Spanish dishes, although they are not oriented toward any specific kind of cuisine. This panorama is completed by specialty restaurants, such as vegetarian and macrobiotic ones.

In the mid-1980s, when foreign immigration to Spain increased, ethnic restaurants (Chinese, South American, Pakistani, Indian, Moroccan, Lebanese, etc.) became more numerous, especially in urban areas, adding to other restaurants that already offered other kinds of food, mainly European (Italian, Greek, French, German, etc.). In recent years, ethnic fast food, such as warm donner kebab (Turkish-German style), in restaurants

or also as a food in the street or take-out, is very popular at reasonable prices.

Restaurants that specialize in new cuisine deserve special mention. Spain, together with France, is currently the leading country for cutting-edge, creative cuisine. Some of the best chefs and restaurants in the world are located in Spain, more specifically in Catalonia, the Basque Country, and, to a lesser degree, in Madrid. The Catalan Ferran Adrià (internationally regarded as the most innovative chef at the moment), Santi Santamaría, Carme Ruscalleda, the Basque Juan María Arzak, and Pedro Subijana belong to the international cooking elite. This has triggered a proliferation of high-level cooking schools and the consolidation of an outstanding generation of chefs who have turned their restaurants into an impressive feature of the current Spanish gastronomy.

Basque Gastronomic Societies or *Txokos*

The relationship of Basques with cooking and eating is very close, to the extent that it is claimed to be one of their own cultural features. Private Basque gastronomic societies were started in the nineteenth century. They are usually reserved for men, although some of them have admitted women as members in the last decades. The only way to visit one is by invitation and in the company of a member. All the activities of these societies revolve around food and their members compete in the preparation of special dishes for their brethren. The societies' members have contributed to preserving and recovering old recipes, and to innovating cuisine. Some of the most renowned Basque chefs of the moment have belonged to a gastronomic society.

Fast Food and Take Out

Since the 1970s, Spain experienced a boom of pizzerias and later on, under the influence of North America, of fast-food outlets, which have enjoyed increasing success from the 1980s on. Most of the popular international fast-food chains can be found in Spain, although, unlike in other European countries the market penetration rate of this kind of establishment in Spain is less than 5 percent.[7] Some local fast-food franchises have been created to counteract this phenomenon, supporting Spanish food, such as sandwiches *(bocadillos)* made with long Spanish loaves and filled with various local products (ham, *chorizo,* cheese, meat, peppers, etc.). Take-out food has also become more popular in the last decades, espe-

cially in the cities. Pizzerias and ethnic take-out provide quick, hot meals at low prices. In the case of pizzerias, it is worth distinguishing between those that are fast-food chains, which usually deliver and provide take-out pizzas, and the popular pizzerias (mainly Italian and Argentinean), which prepare pizzas to be eaten on the premises, and thus, must be regarded as restaurants.

Last, there are also fast-food establishments that offer all kinds of dishes (stews, pasta, vegetables, meat, fish) homemade style, saving customers' time and effort.

TRIPS AND OUTDOOR MEALS

Going out to the country, to meadows, rivers, and other places outside the city to have a country meal or a picnic has been a tradition for centuries, due to the favorable climate of the peninsula. In the twentieth century, at the end of the postwar period and in the subsequent years, going to the country with the extended family and friends became a leisure activity that could be afforded by the lower and working classes who could not always afford to gather in a restaurant. These outings involved taking food that had been prepared at home (Spanish potato omelette, sausage, etc.) and could be eaten cold. Alternatively, people carried along the necessary utensils to cook food in the open air (grilled meat was particularly popular, as well as other festive dishes, such as *paella,* if the place was suitable for its preparation). This kind of excursion involved carrying folding chairs and tables and camping cutlery sets; the main means of transportation were utilitarian cars, and the most popular sites were natural environments that were relatively close to the city.

Because of new legislation concerning fire making in natural environments, picnic sites and suitable common spots were created for this type of gathering; they included stone tables and benches, and barbecues for meat roasting. Although this kind of outing is less popular nowadays, some picnic sites are used sporadically.

SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS

In the 1930s, companies were obliged by the law to provide their workers with a cafeteria in case lunch breaks lasted less than two hours; firms also had to subsidize most of the meal if there were more than 50 workers.[8] During the 1960s, costs were cut down by eliminating personnel and introducing self-service cafeterias. Currently, only large firms or those in in-

dustrial areas far away from the city have cafeterias. In urban areas, where food options at lunchtime are varied and abundant, cafeterias are not needed.

However, in recent decades there has been, in general terms, an important expansion of common dining halls in universities, schools, health centers, factories, and so forth. The food is inexpensive (they are usually publicly supported) and they address the increasing need of the population for eating their meals outside home at lunchtime and during night shifts. Recently, the menus have reflected a change in eating modes, including diet and vegetarian dishes, halal, and so forth. Schools are a special case. School dining halls have a double function: they provide a meal for children who cannot go home for lunch, and they are the place where table manners and food practices are learned. In recent years, the focus has been on nutritional balance and offering the healthiest possible foods.

NOTES

1. Data from Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Commission, which carries out surveys on diverse issues related to countries belonging to the European Union.

2. The term "hotel" would not become established until the beginning of the twentieth century.

3. The antecedents of restaurants date back to the end of the eighteenth century, to the time of the French Revolution. They were created in order to offer the population the same dishes as those consumed by the nobles. The first restaurant was opened in Paris in 1765. This model would rapidly spread to the rest of Europe and the world.

4. Isabel González Turmo, *Sevilla: Banquetes, cartas, tapas y menús* (Seville: Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 1996).

5. While restaurants were more elitist, there was no clear difference between *fondas* and cafés. *Fondas* apparently offered accommodation and food, while cafés provided drinks and occasionally food as well. However, it was common for these terms to be confused.

6. Beer pubs had already made their appearance in the sixteenth century, due to the influence of Emperor Charles and his court, but they were not popular yet.

7. In Switzerland and the United Kingdom the fast-food market penetration rate is 20 percent; the market penetration rate in Germany, Sweden, and France is between 10 and 20 percent. In Belgium, Austria, Finland, and Ireland it is between 5 and 10 percent. In Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece it amounts to less than 5 percent.

8. González Turmo, *Sevilla: Banquetes, cartas, tapas y menús*.

6

Special Occasions: Holidays, Celebrations, and Religious Rituals

Celebrations are very popular in Spanish society, and food plays an important role on these occasions. We can distinguish between private celebrations and public ones; the latter can be further classified into local, regional, and national festivities. Most celebrations are associated with typical foods, which are always eaten and shared in social contexts.

Culturally, Spain has a long-established Catholic tradition, although currently, religious practice has decreased significantly. Despite this secularization, annual festivities, mostly of religious origin, are still observed and celebrated. In general, there is a renewed interest and a wish to recover traditions, although celebrations are informed nowadays by a different social and cultural meaning.

This chapter will discuss the most important festivities through the year. Only those celebrations that are of gastronomic interest and involve typical food preparations will be contemplated. In addition, some of the most important personal and familial celebrations—those related to the life cycle—in which food also plays an essential role, will be overviewed.

THE CHRISTMAS CYCLE

The Christmas season—the Christmas religious cycle—officially begins December 8, the day of the Immaculate Conception. In many Spanish cities (such as Seville, for example) and villages it is celebrated each year with dances, parades, or community banquets.

From Saint Lucia's Day (December 13, the prelude to Christmas celebrations) on until Christmas, there are many Christmas markets with stalls where one can find all kinds of Christmas decoration: from the *belenes*—the little figures that represent the birth of Christ—to Christmas trees. The variety of the stalls is expanding: one can find jewels, handmade crafts, and typical Christmas food and sweets. Christmas markets in Spain are scattered among villages and cities with booths filled with lots of different food, fresh and dried fruits, such as raisins, oranges, apples, and nuts. There are also cakes, marzipan candies, and other baked goods.

In Spain, big Christmas celebrations occur on Christmas Eve (December 24) and Christmas Day (December 25). Depending on the region, one day is celebrated more than the other. In the center and the west of the peninsula, for example, Christmas Eve is the most celebrated day, whereas in the east (and especially in Catalonia), Christmas Day is the most important one.

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve is traditionally a family celebration, and until very recently, bars and restaurants used to be closed in the evening. It is commonly celebrated with a big dinner, usually in the home of one of the family members. Traditionally, baked sea brim has been the main dish in many areas of the interior of the peninsula, such as the Castilian Meseta. Stuffed chicken (*capon*) turned into the main Christmas Eve dish in the mid-twentieth century, when it was not as common as it is today.

Even though the tendency is to pull out all the stops for the Christmas meal, there is no one particular Christmas menu to speak of. The menu is much more varied and standardized (seafood, shrimps, prawns, sea bream, turkey, lamb, piglet, etc.). Until some decades ago, however, each region had its own typical Christmas Eve menu.

As for cakes and drinks, a few are more or less common to all tables: *turrón* (nougat) and marzipan (desserts of Arabic origin, made with almonds and honey), *polvorones* (made with almonds, lard, sugar, and cinnamon), and *mantecados* (made with almonds, lard, egg, flour, sugar, and cinnamon). The *turrón* is the most important Christmas dessert: a very tasty and sweet nougat of Arabic origin made with almonds and honey or sugar, without which it would just not be Christmas in Spain. There are innumerable variations—chocolate, coconut, orange, praline—but the oldest and authentic recipes are those for "soft" (Jijona) *turrón*, made with ground almonds, or "hard" (Alicante) *turrón*, made with whole almonds,



Cava.

or, recently, also served as an ice cream. Besides sweets, people also eat dried fruits and nuts: almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, figs, and raisins.

Drinks usually include Spanish wines (red for meat and white for fish and seafood), cider, and especially *cava,* the festive drink par excellence, which became widespread during the twentieth century and is a must for all celebrations nowadays.

Catholics usually attend midnight Mass (*Misa del Gallo,* literally, "Cock Mass" or Mass of the Rooster). According to the Catholic tradition, this animal was the first one to witness Jesus' birth and announce it to the world. The family members attend midnight mass together and after that they have a snack (sweet wine, dried fruits, Christmas sweets, etc.).

Young people usually go out with their friends after they have had the "typical" dinner at home with their families.

Christmas Day

As on Christmas Eve, the Christmas Day table is set with the best tablecloth, cutlery, and glasses. As for the Christmas menu, although there has been a certain homogenization with prestige food (meat, seafood, etc.) taking center stage, each region has its own dishes. These include varieties of stew (such as Catalan *escudella y carn d'olla* or stew with meatballs from Valencia), *capon* (chicken), and roast lamb. Desserts are similar to those served on Christmas Eve: *turrón* (nougat), marzipan, *polvorones, mantecados,* and dried fruits. And also important on Christmas day is wine, and finally *cava*—must-haves for Spanish celebrations.

Saint Stephen's Day

In Catalonia and some areas of the Levant, Saint Stephen's Day (December 26) is also a holiday. This traditional festivity is still maintained in Catalonia, whereas it has been lost in other places such as the Valencia region. On this day people usually consume the same dishes as on Christmas (very often, the abundant leftovers).

New Year's Eve

The last day of the year is celebrated all over Spain with a very special dinner. After dinner, at midnight, millions of Spaniards eat grapes while the big clocks of cities and towns chime twelve strokes (the most popular clock on this night is in the *Puerta del Sol* in Madrid, which is shown on TV for all to see). They eat one grape for each stroke and tradition has it that those who manage to eat the twelve grapes at the rhythm of the strokes will have a good year. This is a happy moment, pregnant with good intentions for the year that has just started. Spaniards celebrate the New Year toasting with *cava.* Afterward, most people go to the several parties, balls, and cotillions, public or private, organized everywhere.

New Year's Day

Lunch on the first day of the year is usually a family meal and it is rather late (about 3 P.M. or later), because everybody, especially young people,

has been celebrating the New Year until early morning hours. Lunch is served again on a festively decorated table and the menu is quite elaborate, but also in this case, there is no one particular New Year's Day menu to speak of.

Three Kings' Day

In Anglo-Saxon countries Santa Claus brings gifts to children on Christmas Eve. Spaniards, however, celebrate Three Kings' Day (Twelfth Night) on January 6. January 5, the Feast of the Epiphany, is heralded with parades in cities where candy and sweets are distributed to throngs of children. On the night of January 5, children go to bed hoping to find, the following morning, the gifts left by the Three Eastern Kings. On January 6, after a family lunch, the typical Epiphany cake is eaten: *Roscón de Reyes*, a ring-shaped cake made with fine dough and decorated with little pieces of candied fruits symbolizing the rubies and emeralds that, according to the popular imagination, adorned the cloaks of the Three Kings. A little surprise is hidden inside the dough, usually a small figurine, and the one who finds it is crowned king of the house with a golden cardboard crown (which usually comes with the cake). The *roscón* may also contain a dry broad bean, and traditionally, the person who finds it must pay for the cake (though this is not usually enforced).

Saint Agatha's Eve and Day

In the north of Spain (particularly in the Basque Country, Navarra, and La Rioja) on Saint Agatha's Eve (February 4), many choirs (children and also adults, but particularly young people) gather in the street to sing to this patron saint of young people and also women.[1]

In the villages, the choirs are frequently dressed in the typical local style and they also carry big wooden sticks with them to keep the rhythm. Neighbors give the choirs some food (eggs, bacon, sausages, wine) or, recently, also some money for a shared banquet.

CARNIVAL AND LENT

Carnival and Lent belong to the Easter cycle of holidays. Carnival goes back to the fifteenth century and became popular in Spain in the sixteenth. It is the celebration of excess and entertainment. Although it has almost completely lost its religious meaning, it is also the time when people "take their leave" from meat for Lent.

Carnival celebration was banned in Spain during the last dictatorship. The reason is clear: Carnival is the most irreverent, subversive, authority-defying of festivals. Since it was legalized under democracy, in all Spain the Carnival has progressed as a feast that is both of the street and for the street. Many Carnival celebrations and parades are renowned all over Spain: Tenerife (said to be second only to that in Rio de Janeiro); Las Palmas, in the Canary Islands; Cadis, in Andalusia; Sitges, in Catalonia (the most important gay carnival in Europe); or the carnivals in many small villages in the Pyrenean area (in Navarre, Aragon, or even in Catalonia).

In the past, since Lent was associated with contrition and abstention from meat, people tried to enjoy food (especially meat) as much as they could during Carnival. This was not only because during the next 40 days meat was forbidden by religion (to commemorate Christ's 40 days in the desert), but also because people were eager to consume a food that was otherwise scarce throughout the rest of the year. Fat Thursday was the first day of this period before Lent, characterized by abundant and communal meals that are still had in some places. For example, a typical food was crackling omelette and, more specifically potato omelette, eaten above all



Market stand with salt cod and other salted preparations.

by schoolchildren who enjoyed this holiday very much. In certain areas, such as Catalonia, another typical dish is *butifarra* with egg. The last day of Carnival is also known as *fiesta* or *entierro de la sardina* ("sardine holiday"); a sardine is buried as a sign that Carnival festivities are over. That day is still celebrated in various Spanish areas with a popular sardine feast (different historical and artistic representations of that day in Madrid are renowned, as, for example, Goya or Gutiérrez Solana's masterpieces with this title: *El entierro de la sardina*).

Lent is a period of contrition and reduction of food; although the religious meaning is not as important as is once was, some traditions are still maintained and fish consumption, for example, increases. The most popular fish is cod, which is cooked in countless tasty and imaginative ways. The typical Lent cakes are *buñuelos* (spongy fritters made with dough and aniseed, which are fried and coated in sugar).

Carnival traditions persist. For example, in Barcelona's food markets, a new "tradition" was born also a few years ago: for the Shrove Tuesday Carnival, shopkeepers come to work in fancy dress, and, in some markets, when they are selling food, they have also a glass of *cava* with their customers.

THE HOLY WEEK CYCLE

The Holy Week commemorates the passion of Christ. Religious celebrations were carried out all over Spain in the past, but the religious significance has been lost in most parts of the north of the peninsula. In the south, conversely, religious tradition is still very common, especially in Andalusia, where Holy Week processions are widely popular. On Palm Sunday (last Sunday before the Holy Week), people go to mass in the morning and carry laurel and herbs (adults, and particularly women) or palms (children) to be blessed by the priest. Boys carry a simple palm branch, and girls carry a branch that has been decorated. They often have sweets, tinsel, or other decorations hanging from them. Laurel and other herbs blessed by the priest seem to be very good to put in stews or other recipes during the year.

During Holy Week, meat was still prohibited from ancient times until the late twentieth century. The prominent dishes used to be garlic soup, thick soups (with chickpeas for example), and fish (more specifically codfish). Among the typical sweets were rice with milk and *torrijas*, a dessert made with bread slices soaked in milk, which are then fried in oil and coated with cinnamon and sugar (or honey). *Buñuelos* are also eaten. On

Easter Monday people eat decorated chocolate eggs. In Catalonia, this tradition is more spectacular because Easter *monas*—traditional chocolate shapes and decorations—may be enormous chocolate masterpieces.[2] Currently, *monas* are placed on top of a profusely decorated cake, which is served as dessert at the end of Easter Monday lunches.

Together with spring, the summer season is the period of festivities par excellence. Most local festivals and patron's holidays are celebrated in the summer. Some of these festivals have been shifted to the summer period, at least symbolically, because it is during these months that tourists and natives go back to the small villages where the festivals are celebrated. All over Spain, *romerías* (pilgrimages) are very common, as well as other kinds of celebrations that involve communal meals and sharing food.

San Juan's Day

The night of San Juan (Saint John) (June 24) is a festivity that opens the summer period. Its celebration coincides, in fact, with the summer solstice. It is common in most parts of Spain, especially on the Mediterranean coast, and it is widely known as "night of the fire" because people light bonfires that keep burning while everybody celebrates with typical summer dances, music, and communal meals. In Catalonia and some areas of the Levant, it is traditional to eat *cocas*, a typical cake made with dough and various ingredients: candied fruit, pine nuts, and cream crackling. A few decades ago the dances held on the nights of Saint Peter's and Saint James' Days (*Santiago*), the eve of June 28 and July 25, respectively, were also quite popular; *cocas* were also a traditional food on these occasions. Both festivities, however, especially that of *Santiago*, have disappeared.

FALL CYCLE

Celebrations of the Dead

Although it cannot be considered a festivity in the strict sense of the term, All Saints' Day (November 1) is also bound to special food practices. Before the arrival of winter it is common to see vendors offering roasted chestnuts and sweet potatoes. These foods are eaten on the eve of All Saints' Day during the traditional dinner called *castañada* ("chestnut feast"). This holiday is also celebrated in schools, where children have parties and eat chestnuts, sweet potatoes, and other typical foods.

In many villages, All Saints' Day is characterized by communal meals that include the following specialties: the already mentioned chestnuts and sweet potatoes, "Saints' bones" (made with marzipan and filled with chocolate, sweet potato, custard, etc.), *buñuelos de viento* (fine dough balls fried in olive oil and coated in sugar), or, in Catalonia, *panellets* (small cakes made with potato, sugar, almonds, and pine nuts). Other pastries also remind people of the dead.

In various Spanish localities, especially in the north, people (mainly the elderly) still keep the tradition of visiting cemeteries and eating there to honor the memory of their dead kin. This ritual practice is of Roman origin and consists in having a family feast by the tomb of the dead, symbolically sharing food and drink with them.

Life Cycle Celebrations

Various occasions in the life cycle are important socially and are celebrated in a special way with particular dishes. As previously mentioned, religious practices and feelings have dramatically decreased. Yet many traditions of religious origin are still preserved as festive occasions despite the fact that they have lost their primordial significance. Weddings have undergone a process of laicization without losing their festive component and the traditional banquets.

Baptism

In spite of the fact that it is not as popular as it used to be some decades ago, baptism (which celebrates the entry of the newborn into the church) is still practiced by wide sectors of the Spanish society. The ceremony is usually followed either by a modest banquet (sometimes not so modest, depending on the family's wealth) to which not only godparents, but also relatives and closest friends are invited: alternatively parents treat their guests to a snack, which consists of hot chocolate and some cakes or pastries. It is also common to give guests a gift, usually *peladillas* ("Jordan almonds," almonds coated with solid sugar) or candies.

First Communion

First Communion is intimately bound to the Catholic life cycle, even more than baptism, although its popularity is also diminishing nowadays. During this ceremony children receive Communion (they receive the

consecrated host) in church for the first time. They wear special clothes, especially girls, who usually wear a long white dress, similar to that worn by a bride (a relatively recent practice). As is common with baptism, the first communion is also celebrated with a banquet together with family and friends. Until the 1950s, however, this religious ceremony was rather intimate and it was celebrated in schools, only with other children who were also receiving First Communion. Instead of celebrating it with a banquet, people had breakfast or an afternoon snack *(merienda)* of chocolate and cakes.

Weddings

A wedding is, perhaps, the most important and socially conspicuous event in a person's life. After the ceremony—religious or civil—guests are invited to a wedding banquet (it may be either a lunch or a dinner, attended by just a few people or by hundreds of guests). In the past, the banquet was usually paid for by the father of the bride, but nowadays it is common for families to share expenses, especially if the number of guests is very high. Currently, banquets are usually held in restaurants (some specialize in this kind of affair); here, guests sit within a near or far distance from the bride and bridegroom, depending on how close their bond with the married couple is. The bride and bridegroom sit at the bridal table with their parents and sometimes also with their grandparents. The rest of the relations are seated at nearby tables, and the guests who are least close to the family are seated at the farthest tables.

There is no typical menu for weddings. Usually, after an aperitif, four courses are served: a starter, soup or cream, the main course—red meat, fish, or something similar—and dessert. Drinks include wines (white and red), water, and finally *cava*. After the dessert, the bride and bridegroom symbolically cut the wedding cake before all their guests; coffee and liquors are served last. The wedding cake may consist of various ingredients, although it is usually a sponge cake filled with chocolate, custard, and so forth, and covered in custard, cream, or meringue. The cake usually has a light color and it is decorated with sugar, chocolate, and so forth. On top of it there are usually two figurines representing newlyweds.

Funerals

In urban Spain there is no social meal related to funerals. In the past, wakes were held in the homes and it was common to offer food and drink

to those who had come to join the family bereavement. Today, this cultural aspect exists only in rural areas. On some occasions the family and relatives had lunch or dinner together, to honor the memory of the deceased. At present, however, it is rather uncommon for wakes to be held in houses—particularly in urban areas—and the dead are carried to funeral homes arranged for this purpose; after the wake the funeral party goes straight to cemeteries or crematories.

Birthdays

Most Spaniards celebrate birthdays. Children's birthdays are usually celebrated with a party (a *merienda,* where sandwiches, snacks, sweets, or, most popularly, hot chocolate and cakes are offered) to which other children are invited, either at home or, more recently, on some kind of public premises. For adults, the celebration may consist of a lunch or dinner at home or in a restaurant, together with the family and close friends. The chief gastronomic element of any birthday is a cake made from various ingredients (chocolate, custard, cream, etc.). It is topped by as many small candles as the age of the birthday person, who will blow them out and will subsequently cut the cake and serve it. Adults, as with most celebrations, usually toast with *cava*.

NOTES

1. In other places in Spain, such as the famous village called Zamarramala, in Toledo (Castila-La Mancha), Saint Agatha is the "patron" of women. The "ritual inversion" of gender roles in this day in Zamarramala, when women take all the local political power in the village, is world renowned.
2. Particularly after 1935–1940, when the Catalan pâtissier J. Santapau, from Barcelona, presented his first creations.

7

Diet and Health

RECENT CHANGES IN DIET

The Spanish diet changed remarkably throughout the twentieth century. At the beginning of the 1930s, before the Spanish civil war, the diet of the working class mainly consisted of carbohydrates (bread, potatoes, rice, pulses), milk, fish (chiefly cod), vegetables, fruit, and a little meat and fat, mainly from olive oil. This diet would be later known as the "Mediterranean diet." The civil war and the postwar period were characterized by scarcity of food and even by famine, which deeply affected the generations of the 1930s and 1940s. After the economic recovery of the 1960s and 1970s, the Spanish diet reverted to its previous pattern: grains and pulses, vegetables, potherbs, abundant fish (mainly sardines and cod), roast meat, olive oil, and eggs. Yet, since then the Spanish diet has varied greatly again: the rates of meat consumption per person have soared, and so have those relative to dairy products, while carbohydrate consumption has dropped significantly. In general, the consumption of sugar and commercially prepared cakes has also increased, alerting physicians about a possible progressive abandonment of Mediterranean food patterns, favoring less healthy practices, imported from central and northern Europe and from North America. Although there are not as many grounds for medical concern in Spain as in other countries, health has become a current issue. Increasingly greater attention is being devoted to illnesses caused by overnutrition, such as high cholesterol, cardiopathy, hypertension, obesity, and diabetes. As in other industrialized countries, the public health concern with food practices has led to a process of the "medicalization" of food.

THE SPANISH DIET

As the latest official survey has shown, after a period of decrease (between 1987 and 1999), the consumption of some foods groups, such as fruit, vegetables, and fish, has risen again.[1]

Meat consumption is steady (25% of the current Spanish food budget is spent on meat), and fish consumption has slightly increased, too. Milk consumption, after a notable increase in the last years, has now diminished, while dairy product consumption has increased remarkably. Olive oil, one of the pillars of Spanish gastronomy and the healthiest of all fats, is the most used fat in Spanish kitchens. There has been, however, an increase in pastry and cake consumption, while carbohydrates appear to have become less popular in the last years.

As for drinks, wine is still the alcoholic drink par excellence on Spanish tables. There has been an increase in the consumption of quality and designation of origin wines, while low-quality wine sales have dropped. Beer consumption rates are steady and rising, while the popularity of soft drinks has come to a standstill in the last years.

In new food trends, organic products are slowly finding their place on the Spanish market. Ready-made dishes have also become more popular because they are easy to prepare and save time. Companies making ready-made food are tending to reduce the fat contained in their products and to increase the amount of vegetables and grains. The average Spanish food-related expenses in 2003 amounted to about $1,100.

HEALTH

Food-related health concerns are a constant in present-day Spanish society. Not only health authorities, but also food companies have started to address health problems promoting “healthier,” “balanced,” and “Mediterranean” products.

The concern of Spanish institutions about health and diet must be understood in terms of the progressive change in food practices since the 1980s. There has been an increase in saturated fat consumption and a decrease in carbohydrates, fiber, and vitamin consumption, along with an increase of sedentary jobs (most of the population works in the service sector). Overeating has also directly affected the development of food-related pathologies.

Since the mid-1960s, when the Spanish diet corresponded to the Mediterranean diet pattern (considered the healthiest eating option),

there has been an increase in the percentage of energy derived from fats; fat content increased from 32 percent in the 1960s to more than 42 percent in the 1990s, to the detriment of carbohydrates (which provided 53% of total calories in the 1960s and only 40% in the 1990s). All these changes in diet may have directly caused certain diseases and ailments.

Hypercholesterolemia and Cardiovascular Diseases

Hypercholesterolemia is among the cardiovascular risk factors that can be attenuated through diet. Various researches have proven that there is a direct connection between deaths by cardiovascular diseases and cholesterol concentration due to a diet rich in saturated fat. In Mediterranean countries like Spain, the intake of calories derived from fats is higher than 35 percent and sometimes it rises to 40 percent; saturated (animal) fat only amounts to 12 percent of the total fats, because olive oil is still the main fat source.[2]

Yet the Spanish diet is slowly changing and becoming increasingly rich in saturated fats, which, in most cases, are hidden. This change in diet might lead to an increase in cholesterol rates, and in fact hypercholesterolemia cases have increased in the last decades, especially due to new food practices and lifestyle (sedentary jobs, less physical exercise, etc.).

Circulatory system diseases are the number-one cause of death in Spain (they are responsible for 40% of total deaths), and they mainly affect the male population. Coronary diseases are the biggest killers. In geographical terms, the mortality rate due to such diseases is higher in the south of Spain and the Mediterranean area than in the north. In spite of all this, if compared with those of other countries, Spanish mortality rates are rather low. The number of deaths from coronary diseases is similar to that of other Mediterranean countries, and much lower than those of northern and central Europe and the United States.

Obesity

A person is considered to be obese if the amount of fat in his or her body is greater than 30 percent (according to the standard body mass index). Obesity is a recent health problem in Spain and it is evolving according to the same patterns as those of other industrialized countries. In comparative terms, between 1977 and 1997 there has been a 3.9 percent increase in cases of obesity.[3] Recent data show that the percentage of overweight Spaniards has increased to 30 percent; of this percentage, 12 percent cor-

responds to obese people. Obesity is predominant especially in Galicia, Andalusia, and the Canary Islands. Western European countries have significantly lower rates than eastern European ones and than the United States. Spain is basically at the same level as other Mediterranean countries, occupying a medium-low position within the statistics.

Diabetes

Diabetes occurs either when pancreas loses its ability to produce insulin, or when body cells develop a resistance to it. Since the late 1990s, the percentage of diabetic people in Spain has increased due to risk factors, such as obesity (around 80% of diabetic people are obese), sedentary life, and to the longer life span of the elderly population. At present, however, less than 5 percent of the Spanish population suffers from diabetes.

Cancer

In Spain, as in other industrialized countries, cancer causes 25 percent of deaths, and in 50 percent of these cases, diet may have had a direct influence. Breast, colon, and prostate cancer are the most frequent ones, and their appearance has been related mainly to the consumption of saturated fats, meat, and its by-products. Diets rich in fresh fruit and vegetables (mostly raw vegetables) may prevent various kinds of cancer, especially lung cancer and tumors of the digestive system.

Eating Disorders (Anorexia and Bulimia)

These pathologies have a psychological origin and reflect the social image, values, and cultural stereotypes to which teenagers are daily exposed. These disorders are relatively new in Spain, appearing only in the last decades.

The figures relative to anorexia cases correspond to 0.4 percent, those relative to bulimia to 1.2 percent, and cases of anorexia mixed with bulimia amount to 2.5 percent. Women between 14 and 22 years of age are the most affected group; out of the total of Spanish cases, 8 to 18 percent are adults. Eating behavior disorders are the leading psychiatric pathology in Spanish teenagers, and they currently affect 5 percent of the population.

Alcoholism

Alcohol consumption has usually had a social character in Spain. At the beginning of the 1990s, Spaniards were among the five biggest alcohol

consumers in the world (following France, Portugal, Luxembourg, and Hungary). Yet alcoholic drink consumption per capita in Spain has now diminished by 25 percent since 1990 and it actually corresponds to approximately 2.5 gallons per person per year. By regions, the highest alcohol consumption is reported in the north (Galicia, Basque Country, Navarra, and La Rioja), while the regions reporting the lowest consumption are southern and Mediterranean ones (the Canary and Balearic Islands, Murcia, Valencia, Andalusia, Catalonia, and Madrid). Until the 1960s, the most consumed alcoholic drink in Spain was wine, but from the 1980s onward, beer and liquors with higher alcohol content became more popular.

Although there are still important gender differences (the number of male drinkers is twice that of female ones), the contrast notably diminishes when the group studied is that of young people; besides, youth start drinking at increasingly earlier ages.

Promotion of the "Mediterranean Diet" as a Healthy Eating Model

In general, the data relative to food-related diseases are still favorable in Spain if compared with those of its neighboring European countries. However, the increase in some of the health-related indexes have set off the prevention alarm, especially as far as the afore-mentioned eating habits and lifestyles are concerned. To address the increase in saturated fat, sugar, and calorie content recorded in the last decades, Spanish health authorities have started a campaign to promote foods that are considered healthier. Most of these foodstuffs are part of the Mediterranean diet, mainly based on a high consumption of grains, fruit, vegetables, pulses, olive oil, fish, moderate wine consumption, and small quantities of red meat, dairy, and sugar. This results in a diet rich in fiber, vitamins, and carbohydrates (through fruit, vegetables, grains, and pulses), polyunsaturated fats (mostly from vegetables and fish), and monounsaturated fats (olive oil).

Indeed, the foods that Spaniards have *traditionally* eaten, at least in the last 100 years, have an important healthy component, which is reflected in the food-related health figures exposed above. Yet, it cannot be forgotten that eating, as a concept, does not only amount to the food ingested, but is affected by other factors, such as lifestyle, eating habits, where, when, and with whom people eat, and physical exercise. The idea of eating as a social activity, sharing food, chatting after a meal, and sitting for longer after eating are all factors that contribute to better digestion and absorption of foodstuffs. Likewise, lack of exercise may often be as re-

sponsible for an increase in diseases as the ingestion of certain foods. To conclude, lifestyle can be said to be as essential to eating as food itself.

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1. *Panel de Consumo Alimentario 2003* (Madrid: Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca, avance inédito, 2004). Survey carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (unpublished).

2. See I. Plaza, et al., "Control de la colesterolemia en España, 2000: Un instrumento para la prevención cardiovascular," *Rev. Esp. Cardiol* 53, no. 6 (June 2000); F. Rodríguez, F. Villar, and J. R. Banegas, "Epidemiología de las enfermedades cardiovasculares y de sus factores de riesgo en España," Sociedad Española de Arteriosclerosis, 2004, http://www.searteriosclerosis.org/aula_searteriosclerosis/tema1/epidemiologia.html.

3. J. A. Martínez, et al., "Variables Independently Associated with Self-Reported Obesity in the European Union," *Public Health Nutr.* 2 (1999); and J. Aranceta et al., "Documento de consenso: Obesidad y riesgo cardiovascular," *Clin. Invest. Arteriosc.* 15, no. 5 (2003).

Glossary

Aceituna Olive.

Ajillo (or "al ajillo") Popular cooking method, with fried garlic and olive oil.

Almuerzo Midmorning meal.

Andalusi From *Al-Andalus*, the Muslim Arab-Berber medieval Spain.

Bacalao Codfish.

Brazo de gitano (Literally "gypsy arm") A kind of dessert roll filled with custard, whipped cream, or chocolate.

Butifarra (Catalan) Big, spicy sausage, usually grilled and accompanied by dry beans.

Calçots (Catalan) Grilled tender onions dressed with a special almond and tomato sauce.

Callos Tripe.

Cantabrian From the north of the Iberian Peninsula (Cantabric Sea).

Carajillo Typical coffee with brandy.

Carnaval Carnival.

Cena Dinner.

Chilindrón (Aragon) Popular way of preparing lamb, using tomatoes and red peppers.

Churros Long doughnuts that are fried and sometimes coated in superfine sugar.

Cocido Stew.

Colmado Grocery store.

Comida Lunch. Also, usually, generic word for "meal."

Cortado Small coffee with a dash of milk.

Desayuno Breakfast.

Embutidos Sausages.

Ensaimada (Catalan, Balearic Islands) Round in shape, like a brioche, made from sweet bread dough and lard.

Escalivada Typical Catalan salad of chopped grilled peppers and eggplant seasoned with salt and olive oil.

Escudella Catalan stew.

Esqueixada Typical cod-based dish from Catalonia, with shredded desalted codfish, combined with minced vegetables and olive oil.

Euskera Basque language.

Fabada (Asturias) Dish made with white beans, accompanied by different sausages.

Farinato Sweet-tasting sausage that is commonly scrambled with eggs.

Fonda Inn.

Freixura (Catalan, Balearic Islands) Offal.

Garum Roman sauce; liquid seasoning made from fermenting fish in saltwater.

Gazpacho Soup made from various vegetables and served cool, especially during the summer. It is one of the most popular dishes of Andalusia and Murcia.

Gofio Toasted wheat or corn, essential part of the gastronomy of the Canary Islands.

Hispania (Latin) The Iberian Peninsula under the Roman Empire.

Horchata Tigernut milk, made from the juice of the *cyperus esculentus sativus* tuber; a sweet drink typical of the area of Valencia.

Hornazo (Castilla y León) A sort of pie filled with abundant sausage and other ingredients.

Huesos de santo (Literally, "Saints' bones") Marzipan sweets eaten on All Saints' Day.

Iberia Iberian Peninsula (politically, Spain and Portugal).

Jamón Ham.

Jamón Ibérico de Bellota Iberian acorn ham.

Jerez Sherry.

Lacón Local Galician savory cooked ham.

Magdalenas Small sponge teacakes.

Manchego From La Mancha region.

Mantecados Lard buns—a dessert.

Marmitako Basque stew made with tuna.

Membrillo Quince jelly.

Merienda Mid-afternoon snack.

Migas Popular dish whose main ingredient is breadcrumbs, eaten in various Spanish regions.

Mojama Dried and salted tuna.

Mojo Sauce from the Canary Islands.

Mozarabic Christians living in Muslim kingdoms in Medieval Spain.

Morisco (medieval and modern ages) New Christian, converted after the *Reconquista* and living in a Spanish Christian kingdom.

Olla podrida Stew.

Orujo Local and popular spirit in northern Spain.

Pa amb tomàquet Popular Catalan dish: bread slices rubbed with tomato, with or without garlic, and dressed with olive oil and salt.

Paella Catalan word meaning frying pan and referring to the large pan where the rice was cooked. Also, the famous and international dish, made with rice and always cooked in this pan.

Patata, Papa Potato.

Pacharán (or Patxaran) (Navarre) Typical spirit obtained by mixing sloe berries with aniseed liquor.

Pimentón Traditional Spanish smoked paprika.

Pintxos In the Basque Country, small portions of various kinds of food (similar to *tapas*), placed on a slice of bread.

Potaje Thick soup.

Puchero Popular word for stew.

Reconquista Christian reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula (seventh to fifteenth centuries).

Rosquillas Small doughnuts.

Sobrasada (Balearic Islands) Sausage made with spiced pork, mainly seasoned with paprika, which gives it the unique red color.

Suquet (Catalan) Luscious, brothy fish stews.

Tapas Popular kind of snack.

Tapeo Going out for *tapas*.

Tarta Cake.

Técula-mécula (From Extremadura) Dessert made of almonds, eggs, sugar, and lard.

Ternasco (Aragon and Navarre) Lamb.

Tocinos de cielo Small cakes made with egg yolk and sugar.

Torrijas Bread slices soaked in milk, fried, and coated in superfine sugar, eaten at Easter.

Turrón Nougat.

Txangurro (Basque) Lobster.

Txakolí Local Basque white wine—young, fresh, and fruity.

Txikitos In the Basque Country, small glasses of red wine or *txakolí*, but also of beer.

Txoko In the Basque Country, a popular Gastronomic Society.

Vermut Aperitif.

Yemas (Literally: “egg yolks”) Sweets made of sugar and egg yolks.

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Index

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